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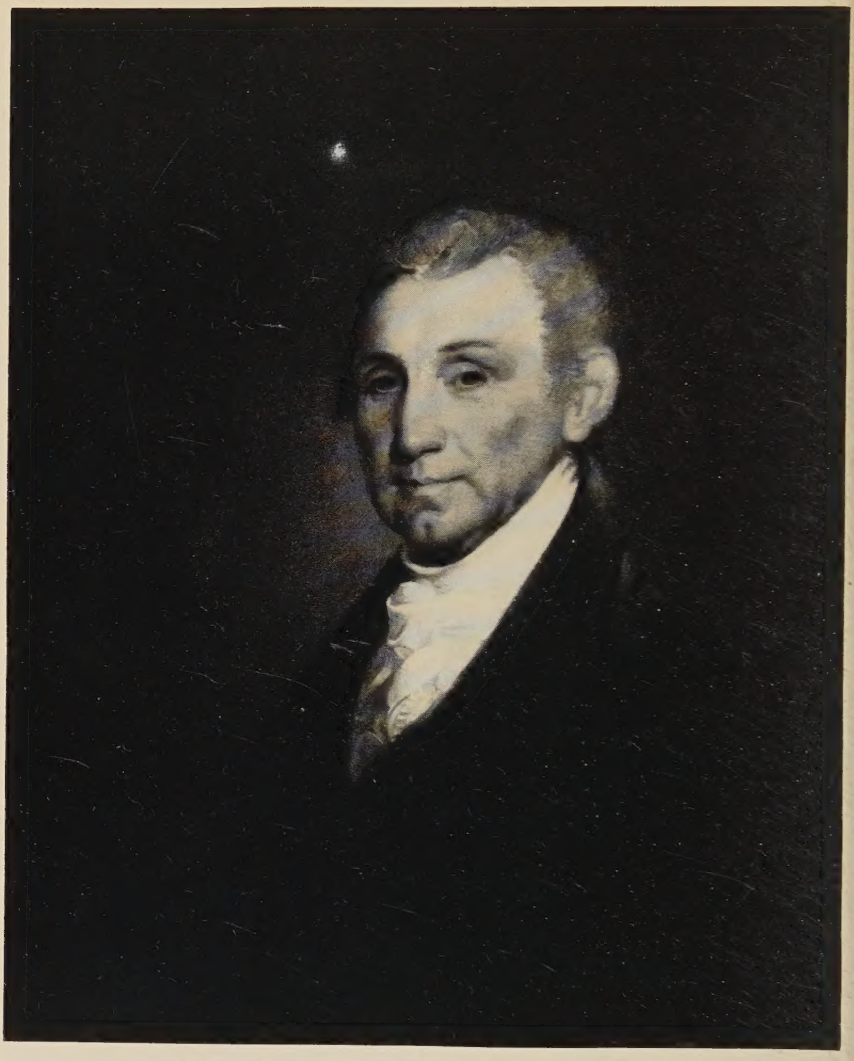

PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE (1758–1831)

By Asher B. Durand after Gilbert Stuart

The New-York Historical Society

THE NEW-YORK
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April 1960

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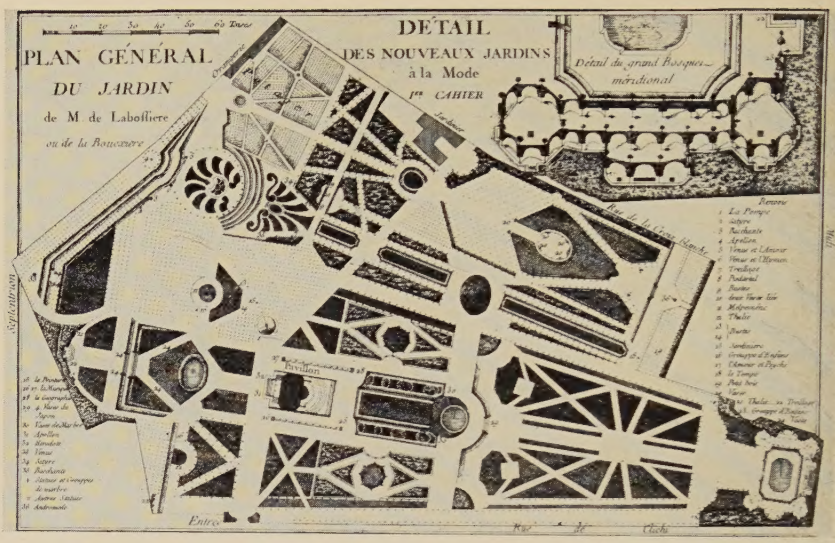
JAMES MONROE AND THE FURNITURE FUND*

by Lucius Wilmerding, Jr.

ONE WINTER day in December 1796, Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, wife of the newly-arrived American minister to France, descended from her carriage at No. 50 Rue de Clichy and entered the garden of the famous Folie La Bouexière. She was paying a call of courtesy or friendship on Mrs. James Monroe, wife of her husband's predecessor. Proceeding through an alley, she approached the house, or pavilion, a little temple consecrated to Apollo and the Muses. Having ascended a high flight of steps and crossed the peristyle, she passed through a vestibule, the salon de stuc, and a small eating room, the salon à l'italienne, and entered one of the two octagonal saloons that adjoined it, presumably the salon d'hiver. Her

* Copyright 1960—Lucius Wilmerding, Jr. The substance of this article will appear in *James Monroe: Public Claimant*, a book by Mr. Wilmerding to be published later this year by the Rutgers University Press.

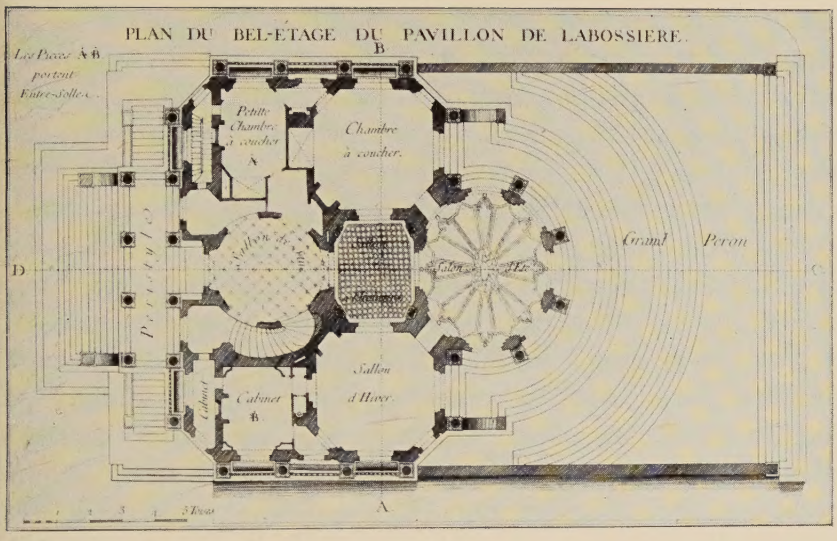


PLANS OF JAMES MONROE'S RESIDENCE IN PARIS, 1795–1797

curiosity did not lead her into the principal piece of the house, the great oval dining room, or salon d'été, but in the other rooms her woman's eye noticed with admiration the beauty and profusion of the gilding, the mirrors, the painted ceilings, the large bronze statues, and the compartments over the windows. She noticed also an incongruity: "Mr. Monroe's furniture is handsome, but as he ordered it with a view to take it to America the chairs are not gilt, and do not suit the rooms."[1] She could not know that this same furniture, or part of it, a quarter of a century later, would figure prominently in a scandal that rocked America during the closing years of Monroe's administration—a scandal that, for all its interest, has escaped the diligence, or been suppressed by the delicacy, of Monroe's partial biographers.

We may begin our story with the establishment on March 3, 1817, the day before Monroe's inauguration, of the so-called Furniture Fund. This was an appropriation of $20,000 made by Congress for the purpose of furnishing the President's House,

[1] *Letter-book of Mary Stead Pinckney* (New York: 1946), 34.



GARDEN (OPP.) AND PAVILION FROM LE ROUGE'S BOOK (1776)

the reconstruction of which was nearing completion. The money was to be expended under the direction of the President himself.

Monroe's first action was to appoint two of his friends, William Lee, Second Auditor of the Treasury, an ostentatious man,[2] and Samuel Lane, Commissioner of Public Buildings, a corrupt one, to manage the business for him. Lee was to digest a plan for furnishing the house, to contract for the articles needed, and to receive them when delivered; Lane was to take charge of the fund and control its disbursements. Both were to do the work without commission or additional compensation, for no appropriation had been made, or would be made, to defray the expenses of their agency.[3]

Lee immediately proceeded to review the situation. The furniture in the former building had been destroyed with it in 1814;

[2] The epithet is Martin Van Buren's (*Autobiography*, 769). During the presidential canvass of 1840 Van Buren was charged with having purchased for the presidential mansion some very extravagant French furniture and, among the rest, a parcel of spoons, alleged to be of pure gold. The articles complained of were in fact bought for Monroe by Lee.

[3] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 14–15.

except for a few pieces nothing could be got from the Tayloe house, occupied by President Madison; nor could anything, new or second-hand, be bought in America, suitable for a presidential palace. It would be necessary to order things from abroad, but it was impossible that they could be received in season for the reception of the President in the fall.[4]

Apprized of this difficulty, Monroe suggested a simple solution. He had in the house he had occupied as Secretary of State a small service of excellent plate, made for his own use by the best artists in France and England; he had also dining room, drawing room, and bedroom furniture, French china, and kitcher furniture, all of it purchased abroad and therefore adapted to the purpose. He had intended to sell these articles upon leaving the Department of State; but he would now offer them to the Government at the price at which they might be valued by two citizens of the first respectability, assisted by persons skilled in the manufacture of each article. He would not, however, expect immediate payment. The whole of the Furniture Fund was needed for purchases abroad. He would, therefore, be content to wait until another appropriation should be made. If that event should not occur, he would retake his furniture and bear the loss occasioned by its use.[5]

An offer made by a principal to himself through an agent is usually accepted. On May 15, 1817, Generals John Mason and John P. Van Ness, aided by experts, valued Monroe's furniture at $9,071.22½.[6] On the same day Monroe acknowledged the receipt from Colonel Lane, in full payment, of this exact sum, less half a cent. Lane charged $6000 of the amount to the Furniture Fund and the balance, as we must presume, to a private running account with the President.[7]

The alacrity with which Monroe accepted a payment for

[4] William Lee to Burwell Bassett, Feb. 24, 1818; 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 244–47.

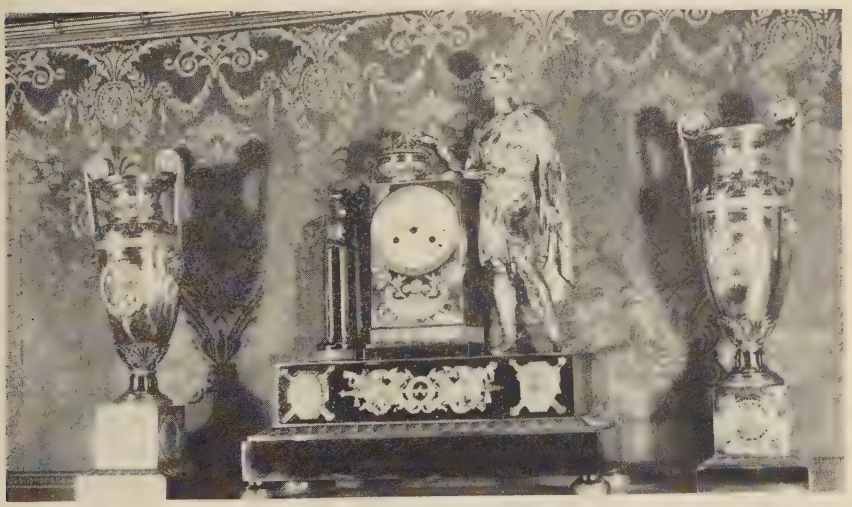
[5] James Monroe to Samuel Lane, April 28, 1817; 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, p. 240.

[6] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 213–17.

[7] This payment exhausted the $20,000 appropriation, for $12,000 had already been advanced to Joseph Russell in France and $2000 to James Yard in Philadelphia.

which he had undertaken to wait might have occasioned some public criticism, had the facts been known to anyone except Monroe himself and a few friendly clerks. Yet Monroe might have offered a satisfactory defense. He was about to leave Washington on a tour of inspection, or a triumphal progress, which would take him through thirteen States; he had expected to finance this tour by the sale of his furniture; but his hopes had been prevented by the necessity of retaining it. In this situation he had accepted the money from Colonel Lane; but he did not regard it as a final payment in discharge of a debt but as an advance, or non-interest bearing loan, to be repaid later from his private funds or from a subsequent appropriation. In point of fact, when Monroe returned to Washington in the autumn, he repaid to the Furniture Fund the $6000 which he had taken out of it.

In the meantime the Fund itself had proved inadequate to its object. Furniture had been ordered from France but the bills were greatly in excess of the estimates. Almost everything, it turned out, had had to be made to order. Two clocks, indeed, had been obtained ready-made—almost the only ones in France



HANNIBAL CLOCK AND VASES PURCHASED IN FRANCE FOR MONROE, 1817

Photographed in the White House by Abble Rowe—Courtesy National Park Service

without nudities; but the furniture for the Oval Room had presented a difficulty. It was desirable to obtain such articles as united strength with elegance, simplicity of design with the richness suitable to the decoration of a house occupied by the First Magistrate of a Free Nation. Mahogany had been specified, but mahogany was not to be had; besides, as the President would be informed by his agents at Le Havre, mahogany was not generally admitted in the furniture of a saloon, even in private gentlemen's houses. Giltwood, a much more expensive material, had accordingly been substituted, and Bellanger, the first ébéniste in Paris, commissioned to make it up. The change of wood had required also a change in the trimmings of the fauteuils, the draperies of the curtains, and so forth; everything must be richer, that everything might be in harmony. Crimson silks had been bought of Cartier fils and the whole made up by Laveissier, a very good tapissier; but crimson was fifty per cent dearer than any other color.[8]

Monroe, notified of these transactions, found himself faced with the prospect, not only of getting nothing from the Government for his private furniture, but of having to meet a deficiency in the Furniture Fund of nearly $11,000. He took the appropriate measures, asked for both a deficiency and a supplemental appropriation, and obtained a further grant to the Fund of $30,000. His friend, William Lee, was careful to apprize the proper committees of Congress of the President's generosity in consenting to the public use of his private furniture; but he found no occasion to mention that the President had derived a compensatory benefit from the private use of public funds.[9]

The new appropriation was made on April 20, 1818. On April 24 Monroe wrote to Colonel Lane again offering to make his furniture available for public use.[10] But he no longer suggested a sale. He would retain his furniture until new furniture was procured, on condition that Lane advance him the amount of

[8] Russell and La Farge to James Monroe, September 15, 1817, and May 25, 1818; 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 159–61, 164–65.

[9] Lee to Bassett, Feb. 24, 1818; *ibid.*, 245.

[10] Monroe to Lane, April 24, 1818; *ibid.*, 240–41.

the valuation to be repaid when that event should happen. The free use of the public money would be an inadequate reparation for the loss he would sustain, and had already sustained, by its use. Lane immediately accepted the offer, re-advanced to Monroe the sum of $9,071.22, re-charged the amount to the Furniture Fund, and took the occasion to declare his opinion in writing that the furniture had been greatly undervalued, that it had been much injured during the winter, and that Monroe should have consented to sell it.[11]

Those who are familiar with the self-serving letters written by lawyers on their own behalf or on that of their clients will not hastily conclude from this correspondence that Monroe had abandoned his idea of selling his furniture to the Government. Indeed, he himself later explained that, by binding himself to retake his furniture unconditionally and to repay the money received for it, he had meant to guard against the contingency of his death by placing the affair entirely under the control of the Government, not doubting, in that event, on a view of all the circumstances, that justice would be done to his family.[12]

Monroe spent the money thus received on further tours of inspection;[13] a continued use was found in the White House for his furniture, and by 1821 he felt justified in translating the advance into a payment. In February of that year he authorized the First Auditor of the Treasury to admit the vouchers relating to this transaction in the settlement of Lane's accounts;[14] and in March of the succeeding year, during Lane's final illness, he added to this authority a positive direction.[15] The Auditor, of course, complied and in the final settlement of the accounts of

[11] Lane to Monroe; *ibid.*, 241.

[12] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, p. 16.

[13] The reader will learn with surprise and, if he be a taxpayer, with envy that the costs of such junkets were not paid out of public funds. Traveling Presidents sponged, like royalty, on the local gentry, accepted free transportation from the mail contractors, but otherwise paid their own way. Monroe stated categorically that the cost of his tours exceeded the sum paid him for his furniture, and that if he had not received the money, he could not have made the inspections.

[14] Monroe to Richard Harrison, Feb. 28, 1821; 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 241–42.

[15] Monroe to Harrison, March 5, 1822; *ibid.*, 247–48.

the Furniture Fund the sum of $9,071.22 was allowed for the amount paid him for his furniture per receipt and account.

Monroe, however, had taken a final precaution. In directing the Auditor to admit his claim, he had undertaken to regard the payment as merely provisional. Upon leaving office he would bring the affair to the attention of Congress and, if it were not approved by the committee or other authority raised to investigate it, he would annul it, retake his furniture, and repay the whole of the money. To protect the public from loss in the event of his death, he pointed out and formally appropriated the funds from which repayment, if required, could be obtained. He had, so he said, an account against the public for balances due him in his foreign missions, of which the principal item was a claim to extra expenses for his special mission to London ending in 1807. He would agree to apply whatever sum might be allowed him for this claim—and he could hardly expect to receive less than $4500—to the payment, so far as it would go, of the amount advanced him on account of his furniture; the furniture itself might then be sold to pay the balance.

The candid reader may perceive in all these dealings nothing really censurable. The President may, indeed, have seemed to be making a contract with himself, inasmuch as he had authority to direct the disbursement of the fund from which he was paid; but the precautions that he had taken to protect the public from loss, and himself from blame, were perhaps adequate. Another of his transactions with the Furniture Fund was, however, less carefully guarded. The articles purchased abroad for the President's House were obtained through the agency of Russell and La Farge, merchants at Le Havre. From this same firm Monroe contemporaneously ordered for his private use 1200 bottles of champagne and burgundy and some other articles. The bill came out blending these two orders together; but, instead of having them separated and referring to the President the charges which originated from his private order, Colonel Lane, by inadvertence or intent, paid the whole and charged the whole upon the Furniture Fund. The error or fraud was presently detected by the

VASES DEPICTING HOMER & BELISARIUS, AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Purchased through Russell and La Farge, Le Havre, 1817

Photo by Abble Rowe—Courtesy National Park Service

accounting officers of the Treasury and the claims for credit disallowed in the settlement of Lane's account. Of this illegal charge Monroe, however, knew nothing at the time it was made. According to the testimony of Lane's clerk, the bill was settled in this manner without his approbation or knowledge.[16]

These two transactions constitute the solid basis of fact upon which would presently be reared an elaborate superstructure of rumor, fancy, and suspicion. They would never have become known to the public, unless by the disclosures of the President himself, but for the inopportune death of Colonel Lane in 1822. A dead man's accounts must be promptly settled. When it was found that Lane had died insolvent with $20,000 of public money unaccounted for, rumors began to circulate obscurely that the President himself had used large sums of public money and there-

[16] Statement of J. Elgar, Jan. 14, 1824; *ibid.*, 243–44.

by occasioned the defalcation. These rumors were fed by the further discovery that Monroe had kept a private, but unvouchered, running account with Lane and that he was indebted in a large amount to the latter's estate.

The circumstances were peculiar. It had been Monroe's habit, during his absences from Washington, to leave the White House in charge of Colonel Lane. From time to time he would place funds in his hands to purchase articles and pay bills, but he never took receipts nor recorded the amounts. As to the application of the funds, he knew nothing at all; for whenever he asked for a settlement of the account, Lane found means to postpone it. But Monroe was not worried; he supposed that he might owe Lane, but thought that there could not be much difference between them either way. When, on his deathbed, Lane offered a settlement, Monroe declined it: he would not distress his friend with the account in his then situation; whether he lived or died, there could be no difficulty about it.[17]

There *was*, however, a difficulty. When, after Lane's death, the representatives of the two parties came to adjust this private account, they found that the credits greatly exceeded the debits. For Lane had not confined his expenditures on Monroe's behalf to the funds supplied him; he had advanced the President money without his request or knowledge. For example: he had supplied large sums of money for the use of the White House to Joseph Jeater, the President's thieving steward; but when the latter had converted the money to his own use, Lane had been afraid to tell the President of the advance.[18] Another transaction might seem even more improper. This was the payment by Lane of an accommodation note for $1500 that Monroe had in the Patriotic Bank. The circumstances were explained as follows: the Bank, in Monroe's absence, called for a curtail of $500; Colonel Lane, a Director of the Bank, remonstrated; the Bank insisted, and Lane, with some warmth, directed that the whole note be charged to him. According to Overton Carr, the Cashier of the Bank:

[17] *Ibid.*, 19, 243.
[18] *Ibid.*, 251–52.

"This was done without the knowledge of Mr. Monroe, as he was not at that time in the city of Washington."[19] As a consequence of such advances the balance stated in Lane's favor by those appointed to settle the account exceeded $6500. Yet, so deficient were the vouchers, that no one could be sure that every item had been entered or correctly charged.[20]

The discovery of the shortage of $20,000 in Lane's public accounts led to a legislative inquiry. In December 1822 a committee was appointed by the House of Representatives to investigate the sale of public lots in Washington; for it was in the management of this business that Lane was thought, and rightly thought, to have perpetrated his frauds. The chairman of this committee, General John Cocke of Tennessee, soon shifted his attention from Lane's transactions with the public to Monroe's transactions with Lane. He evinced a particular interest in the disbursements from the Furniture Fund and in the credits and debits entered in Lane's private account with the President. But when Cocke prepared a report very prejudicial to Monroe, the committee refused to accept it.[21]

At the next session of Congress another committee was appointed, and Cocke was again placed at its head. But though its terms of reference were somewhat wider than before, it again declined to inquire or report what disposition had been made of the $38,000 appropriated for furnishing the White House. The committee held that it was a private transaction between the President and Colonel Lane; that, as the money was to be expended under the direction of the President, he could appoint whomsoever he pleased as his agent; and that the resolution did not authorize the inquiry.[22] Monroe was in complete agreement. For upon being invited by Cocke to attend the committee or to

[19] *Ibid.*, 244. Monroe, who might have remembered the circumstances, preferred to infer them. Speaking of Mr. Carr's evidence, he remarked: "By this it is evident that it [the payment of the note] was not by my desire, nor with my knowledge." *Ibid.*, 20.

[20] *Ibid.*, 271, 275–77.

[21] *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, VI, 287.

[22] 42 *Annals of Congress*, 2609.

answer questions in writing, the President ordered the person who brought him the message to tell Cocke that he was a scoundrel and that that was the only answer he would give him.[23]

Monroe had escaped investigation, but he had not corrected erroneous impressions nor dispelled doubt. His refusal to explain his private affairs, or to answer the interrogations of a Congressional committee looking into the embezzlements of his unfaithful agent, although doubtless occasioned by the indignant disdain of conscious rectitude, did nothing to lighten the dark blot that was spreading over his character. On the contrary, his silence made even more plausible the insinuations and the whispers of an industrious, able, and perhaps malignant opposition. The suspicions of the public were further inflamed when, in the summer of 1824, a committee of Congress, investigating the plot of Ninian Edwards against the presidential candidacy of William H. Crawford, cut off the sworn testimony of Senator James Noble of Indiana immediately after he had stated that Edwards had once told him that Monroe was in his power through the means of Colonel Lane. The stopping of the evidence, as John Quincy Adams foresaw, operated worse on the public mind than if everything had come out.[24]

At last Monroe determined to vindicate his conduct. His course, however, was exceedingly circuitous. On January 5, 1825, he addressed a rather vague message to the two Houses of Congress inviting them to inquire, not particularly into his dealings with Colonel Lane, but generally into *every* transaction of his life in which the public might have any pecuniary interest. If it were found that the public had sustained any loss by any act of his, or of his agents, he was willing to bear it. On the other hand, if the Government owed him, he would hope to collect. A committee might be appointed to report facts now with a view to a decision after his final retirement from public office. No bill, he presumed, would be presented for his signature that would

[23] *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, VI, 287.
[24] *Ibid.*, 387.

operate either for or against him; he would certainly sanction none in his favor.[25]

The Senate, bemused by this message and expecting the action of the House, laid it on the table. The Representatives referred it to a select committee. Disturbed, however, by the suggestion that Monroe might have some claims against the United States, hitherto unknown to the public, and half suspecting that his object was not so much to clear his character as to extract money from the Treasury, they proceeded to shackle their committee by instructions. It must receive from the President such communications and evidence as he might think proper to present, and report the same to the House; but it must neither find nor report facts, still less make recommendations based on them.[26]

This turn of events was unexpected by Monroe and greatly displeased him. For he had taken his measures with care. He had phrased his message in imprecise and general terms in order to avoid the reference of any part of it to the standing Committee of Claims; a select committee, as he rightly thought, would be made up entirely of his friends. He had persuaded one of these, Samuel D. Ingham, to move the committee, knowing that, by custom of the House, the mover would be put at its head. Everything had worked out according to plan, but now the committee had been reduced to a mere conduit through which he might send his communications to the House; he had gained nothing, for he could always communicate his papers to the House through the Speaker.

Nevertheless he did what he could. With celerity he sent to the committee two memorials that he had had ready for almost a year. With one of these we cannot here be concerned. It enumerated and explained the pecuniary demands that, after a silence of twenty or thirty years, he meant to prefer against his country; in the aggregate they might amount to more than $50,000. The second began in general terms. Having invited a view of his

[25] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., House Journal, 110.
[26] 1 *Register of Debates*, 170–186.

claims on the Government, he would now invite a like view of any that the Government might have on him. There was no occurrence of his life, from 1794 to date, that might not be sifted to the bottom by authentic and original documents or by living testimony. All his books and papers were open to the committee's inspection, and in questions of doubt, if there should be any, reference might be made to those of the opposite party. But when Monroe descended to particulars, he greatly narrowed the inquiry. The explanations that he gave, and the letters, bills, vouchers and accounts that he sent in, regarded only his management of the Furniture Fund and the White House establishment.[27]

By means of this memoir, comprising both observations and documents, Monroe might hope to rehabilitate his character and protect it from further aspersion. The memoir was excellently adapted to its object. The documents were so ill-arranged and sometimes so irrelevant, that a true statement of facts could be extracted from them only with the greatest difficulty.[28] But the facts were there, and they proved not the guilt but the misfortune of Monroe. The observations, on the other hand, by suppressing some facts, emphasizing others, but misstating none, left the impression that Monroe was not merely blameless and unfortunate but also deserving of the highest applause.

The duties of the presidential office, Monroe explained, were multifarious. They extended from the internal and external administration of the country to the mere signature of patents, of commissions for the army and navy, and of Mediterranean passports. The day was not long enough for one man to perform them with equal attention. A neglect of the higher duties must redound to the injury of the public; of the lower duties, perhaps to that of the President—especially if they involved a pecuniary responsibility. In this situation he, Monroe, had appointed an

[27] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123, pp. 12–25, 131–253.

[28] John Quincy Adams, who had read all this material before its submission, so greatly misunderstood it that he imagined the President merely to have lent his furniture to the Government for a short period in return for a temporary advance of $6000; *Memoirs*, VI, 289.

agent, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, to manage the Furniture Fund and the household establishment. But how could the public lose? The duties had been committed to the person best qualified by the nature of his office to execute them; Colonel Lane had received no public compensation for his agency; his errors, if any, were chargeable to the President. In the meantime, the whole mind and the unceasing labors of the Chief Magistrate had been employed on the great interests of the nation.

As to the sale of his own furniture to the United States, concerning which so much hubbub had been raised, Monroe could show that the public had been in every way a gainer. Not only had he sold it cheap but he had applied the proceeds to a public purpose, the inspection of the country's maritime and inland frontiers, a work of incalculable value to the nation but one that formed no part of his official duties. The committee should also remember that it was in their power, or the power of Congress, to annul the whole transaction. If it were not approved by competent authority, he had promised to retake his furniture and repay the money.

The committee, confined by its instructions to the duties of a clerkship, received these communications from the President and reported them without comment to the House of Representatives.[20] The House on February 21 ordered the report to lie upon the table.

The investigation by Congress into the transactions of the President with Colonel Lane was now at an end. At the next session of the House of Representatives, it would be remarked that the evidence was incomplete: the Ingham committee had neither inquired for nor collected any contradictory testimony to rebut that which the President himself had brought forward. But the friends of Monroe, from whom these objections proceeded, were not trying to reopen the inquiry. Their real object was to secure a reference of the ex-President's claims *against* the

[20] 18th Cong., 2d Sess., H. Rep. 79, Serial 123. The committee included in this report some miscellaneous papers referred to it on motion of General Cocke; but these did not contradict those submitted by Monroe himself.

Government to a select committee, which they might hope to control, instead of to the standing Committee of Claims, to whose indifferent care the petition had already been entrusted. To this end they argued that Monroe's case still had a double aspect; that only a tribunal of mixed character—a committee which should, on one side, be a court of honor and, on the other, a financial body—was competent to decide it. These arguments prevailed, the Committee of Claims was discharged from further consideration of the case, and the same was referred to a select committee unimpeded by instructions. But, to the surprise of no one, the committee, thus appointed, took no notice of the suggestions, previously made to the prejudice of Monroe, that, in the disbursement of public moneys, he had misapplied them. It sought only to ascertain the nature and extent of his claims against the Government; and in its report it pronounced only upon their intrinsic justice.[30]

Monroe, too, was satisfied to let sleeping dogs lie. He had given a full and honorable explanation of his alleged embezzlements of the public money. He had invited investigation. If Congress had not accepted his invitation, the very omission was a proof of their confidence in the unblemished purity of his private character. One matter was, indeed, unsettled. He had postponed the final adjustment of the furniture account until Congress should have approved the transaction in which he was both buyer and seller. But Congress had expressed no opinion on this point. Taking silence for consent, Monroe asked no further mark of its sentiments. He left the furniture that he had sold to the Government in the White House and the money for it in his pocket.

Here we must leave this ancient scandal. We may regret, as historians, that the Ingham committee was limited by its instructions to the taking of *ex parte* statements and was forbidden to express an opinion on them. We may lament, as respecters of the presidential office, the necessity for an exposure of domestic and household concerns which, in the words of John Quincy Adams, was "almost as incongruous to the station of a President

[30] 19th Cong., 1st Sess., H. Rep. 136, Serial 142.

of the United States as it would be to a blooming virgin to exhibit herself naked before a multitude."[31] But we can hardly think that a fuller and more decent investigation would have brought to light any new facts. A court of honor might have criticized the President for his choice of an agent, or gently chided him for imprudence and inattention in money matters. But it could never have held that, because Lane had received and embezzled public money, and because he had acted as Monroe's agent in public and in private business, Monroe himself must have known of the embezzlement and been responsible for it. Be that as it may, the President's memorial served its purpose. The doubts of the public were dissolved in the gratification of its curiosity, and the charges of malversation breathed against him by his enemies were silently withdrawn.

[31] *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams,* VI, 289. Adams was so impressed by Monroe's experience that, when he became President, he charged himself with the new appropriation for refurnishing the President's House and made himself personally accountable to the Treasury for its expenditure. *Ibid.*, VI, 527.

WHITE HOUSE GREEN ROOM WITH MONROE-INSTALLED FIREPLACE MANTLE
Clock and vases, purchased 1817, on mantle with Adams' portrait above it
Photo by Abble Rowe—Courtesy National Park Service

HENRY KNOX (1750–1806)

By Gilbert Stuart

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

HENRY KNOX

GENERAL WASHINGTON'S GENERAL

by NORTH CALLAHAN*

ON THE COLD evening of March 5, 1770, a husky young man was walking home along icy Cornhill Street in Boston and ran squarely into the violence of the "Boston Massacre." Henry Knox was just 19 but mature enough to understand the seriousness of the tense situation between the irate American colonists and the occupying British troops. He worked in a nearby bookstore and his hobby was militia drill, aided by his wide reading of books on military theory.

Judging from the excitement of the crowd, he thought at first a fire had broken out, but this idea was soon dispelled. As his tall, robust form mingled with the mob, Knox asked questions of friends he recognized. They informed him that the expected climax had come; that the hated redcoats sent over to occupy Boston and help collect objectionable taxes had finally become unbearable, swearing loudly at the colonials and now jostling them with swords and cutlasses.

Young Knox made his way through the milling, angry crowd, some of whom bore clubs and were shouting taunts back at the "lobsterbacks." Seeing one of a group of British soldiers loading his musket, Knox told him that if he fired, according to English law he must die for it. Then taking nearby Captain Thomas Preston by his red coat, Knox urged him to order his troops back. But this was not done, and the infuriated British finally fired into the crowd, killing three and mortally wounding two others. Around this incident, John Adams said, "the foundations of American independence were laid."

Henry Knox later testified at the trial of Captain Preston, who

* Dr. Callahan, Associate Professor at New York University, is author of the recent biography, *Henry Knox: General Washington's General.* The present paper was delivered as an address before The New-York Historical Society, May 5, 1959.

was defended by Adams and Josiah Quincy. Although the testimony of Knox generally favored the Americans, who, he said, had their backs to the soldiers and did not unduly provoke them, his attitude toward the British was fair. This was typical of him. Had Captain Preston followed his advice, there might not have been a "Boston Massacre."

Life was ever to be eventful for Henry Knox. He was not to remain long behind the peaceful counters of a bookstore, where he entertained the Loyalists by his genial remarks and intelligent appreciation of their culture. He even married one of them, plump Lucy Flucker, daughter of the Royal Secretary of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, who had been a frequent visitor to his bookstore—which he now owned. With her marriage vows came a loyalty to her new country and a separation from her parents she was never to see again after they fled this country for England at the outbreak of the Revolution. One dusky June night in 1775, Henry and Lucy Knox, having hurriedly closed the bookstore, gathered their belongings together and slipped out of Boston in a carriage, making their way quietly through the British lines, his bright militia sword sewed within the lining of her petticoat.

Knox offered his services to General George Washington who had come up to Cambridge to take command of a motley American army composed mostly of New Englanders whose personalities he did not understand. But from the first he understood Henry Knox; and time was to show that Boston-born Knox understood Washington as did few men. The bulky young bookseller soon became the army's chief of artillery, later Secretary of War, and was so close to the President personally, that he was known as "Washington's favorite general."

It was John Adams who proposed that Knox be made a colonel and chief of the Continental Army Artillery. But there was a catch. The army had no artillery. So Knox persuaded Washington to let him go to faraway Fort Ticonderoga and bring back the 55-odd pieces of captured British artillery there, this to be

COL. KNOX BRINGING THE CANNON FROM TICONDEROGA TO BOSTON

By John Ward Dunsmore, 1932

Courtesy, Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York, Fraunces Tavern, N.Y.C.

used in an effort to drive the British from Boston. Knox had already expressed his contempt for British marksmanship. They had fired over 100 cannon balls at the Continentals on one occasion. "And did what?" Knox asked. "Why scratched a man's face with the splinters of a rail fence. . . . Nor am I afraid they will hit me, unless directed by the hand of Providence."

So in the middle of November 1775, Knox, now 25 years of age, set out by horseback for Ticonderoga. He went by way of New York City in order to ascertain what supplies could be obtained there. The people of that city he found to be "profane, conceited and mostly Tories." Then he proceeded to his destination. At Lake George on December 4th he spent the night. He happened to be quartered in a one-room roadside cabin with a young British officer who had been captured by the Americans and was on his way southward. This officer was Lieutenant John

André. Being in the same small room, the two young men talked freely far into the night and found they had much in common. Both were near the same age, both liked trade, literature, and military matters. Both were industrious, amiable, and had achieved a measure of success, so that their long conversation was pleasant and by morning they liked each other very much. Yet five years later, Brigadier General Henry Knox sat on the court-martial of Major John André who was convicted and sentenced to death as a British spy. For Knox, this was an ordeal.

Obtaining soldiers and civilians, horses and oxen, Knox made his arduous way with the heavy artillery over ice and snow across the nearly 300 miles of his route from Ticonderoga to Boston. There were delays and disappointments, but as he neared the end of his long journey, Knox showed his ebullient humor in a note to his wife, from whom he had now been separated all too long. "Had I the power to transport myself to you," he wrote Lucy, "how eagerly rapid would be my flight." Then in reference to his rotundity, "It makes me smile to think how I should look—like a tennis ball bowled down the steep."

After epochal hardships including heavy guns breaking through and sinking in the ice-bound rivers, and thaws leaving the gun-bearing sleds stranded in mud, Knox by February delivered to Washington in Cambridge "a noble train of artillery." Acting with that dispatch which characterized his best military moves, Washington thereupon used the artillery to bombard the British out of Boston. Riding in at the head of the army, along with the commander-in-chief, the portly Knox passed the celebrated punning Tory, Dr. Mather Byles, who commented, "I never saw a (Kn)ox fatter in my life!"

From the beginning of the Revolution, Knox had for his artillery an odd accumulation of guns of many caliber. The crude casting foundries of the colonies tried making cannon with varying success, these firing round shot, grape, and shrapnel. Even so, Knox developed this important arm so well that Washington was usually quite pleased with its operations in all the

major battles of the war. Some of the finest young men in the new nation served in the artillery, both because of selection and higher pay. Knox is now known as "the father of the American Army Artillery."

In the battle for New York City, Knox was active in the lower part of Manhattan. By now he had an artillery regiment of 520 men, with 121 light and heavy cannon, many of which were soon to be lost to the British. His wife had come to live with him in a house on lower Broadway, when one morning they looked out of their window and saw a huge British fleet sailing right into the harbor. So Lucy hurried to Connecticut just before the battle for New York City began. Knox hurriedly wrote her not to be worried about him, however, as he went "to bed every night before nine." After the defeat of the Americans on Long Island, Knox was with the last men to leave lower Manhattan, being almost captured by the British who occupied the city. When the harried artillery commander reached upper Manhattan, Washington rejoiced to see him. Knox wrote his brother, William, that he was so busy, "I have not had my clothes of once anights for more than 40 days." His private opinion of Washington's officers was not high, they being for the most part, he said, "a parcel of ignorant, stupid men, who might make tolerable soldiers, but bad officers."

On September 23, 1776, in the midst of military operations, Colonel Henry Knox found time to recommend to Congress that "we ought to have academies in which the whole theory of the art of war shall be taught." For this and his subsequently-expressed similar ideas and planning, as well as the actual conducting of an artillery school based on these plans, Knox has been logically called "the founder of West Point."

The victory at Trenton is said to have been in some ways the high point in Washington's military career, for it turned the tide of the Revolution when at its lowest ebb. Henry Knox, who became a virtual projection of his chief, reached a high mark in this engagement too. Along with other staff officers, he helped

Washington make plans for the battle; and in its initial phase, the crossing of the Delaware River on the icy night of Christmas, 1776, Knox relayed in his thunderous voice the orders of Washington so they could be heard above the roar of the water and the crackling of the ice.

At Trenton itself Knox and his 18 pieces of artillery had a field day. The Hessians there under Colonel Rall had been celebrating Christmas instead of digging needed fortifications. As they, surprised and disorganized, ran into the streets on hearing the American's firing, they made perfect targets for the Continental artillery which had been quickly and skillfully placed. From the head of the main streets, the roaring cannon swept the mercenaries down like nine pins. "The hurry, fright and confusion of the enemy was not unlike that which will be when the last trump shall sound," Knox commented. As the Hessians belatedly tried to set up their own artillery, it was blasted with hot round shot from the patriot guns. Within an hour, this important battle was over, and as Knox, who had been all over the place directing his men, said, "Fortune seems to have smiled upon every part of this enterprise." One happy part for Knox was his promotion to "brigadier general of the artillery." He was the only man ever to hold this rank in the American Army, as it was discontinued later.

Cornwallis soon came to put down these upstart Continentals, and Washington slipped out of Trenton, with Knox having his cannon wheels swathed in rags so as not to disturb the sleeping British troops. Within hours, the tired Americans were in action again at Princeton. Two of Knox's long guns drove many of the British back, while a couple of their own field pieces were captured and turned upon them. The men of Captain Alexander Hamilton, who served in the regiment of artillery under Knox, rolled up a 4-pounder and let fly at a British battalion which had taken refuge in Nassau Hall. The first shot crashed into one of the rooms of the stone structure, striking a painting of King George II and irreverently taking off his head. (This painting

has been replaced with one of George Washington.) Knox later commented, "If we could have secured 1,000 fresh men at Princeton to have pushed on to Brunswick," where the £70,000 British pay chest was located, "we should have struck one of the most brilliant strokes in all history."

When Washington went into winter quarters at Morristown soon afterwards, he had an excellent location in New Jersey, but he lacked men and supplies. So among other steps to remedy this, he sent Knox to New England to obtain cannon, powder, and artillerymen. Boston was proud of its new brigadier general, and the Massachusetts legislature responded well. As a result of these efforts of Knox, the Springfield Arsenal was founded and still functions as an important Army unit today.

From France, United States Commissioner Silas Deane, perhaps too eager to aid our cause, sent over a General Phillipe du Coudray who arrived in Boston with 18 officers and 10 sergeants in attendance, and announced that he was "commander-in-chief of the Continental artillery." Mrs. Knox, then in Boston, was amazed, as she wrote her Henry. The Frenchman and his cortege continued to Washington's headquarters at Morristown where he found the American commander also surprised at this news. Washington immediately informed Congress and stated that Knox was a very valuable officer of wide military reading, sound judgment and clear conception, who through many difficulties had placed the national artillery upon a footing that did him honor. Should du Coudray succeed Knox, the artillery would be "convulsed and unhinged," Washington added, because Knox would resign from the service. Meantime the Frenchman showed Congress that his contract with Deane called for him to be a major general in command of the artillery. Knox then wrote Congress asking to "retire" if du Coudray were placed in command, Generals Nathanael Greene and John Sullivan writing similar letters. Congress resented these blunt communications which came outside of channels but, after some delay, agreed to allow Knox to remain as head of the artillery, and du

Coudray was to have another command. The French officer solved the problem, however, by accidentally falling from horseback into the Schuylkill River and drowning. John Adams commented that this was "a dispensation that will save us much altercation."

The growing role of the artillery was shown in the march of the Continental Army to Philadelphia. It was conspicuous in the line—and so was its commander, Henry Knox, who weighed almost 300 pounds but carried it well. He and his friend, Nathanael Greene, slipped away on a shopping trip to Bethlehem, but on their arrival there found a message from Washington directing them to return to duty at once. In the minor battle of Brandywine Creek, Washington told Knox that his artillery showed better aim than that of the British. A local newspaper also praised the American artillery which it said stayed and fought even after being "forsaken by our infantry."

In an early stage of the Battle of Germantown, General Sir William Howe was sitting astride his horse under a tree, berating his light infantry for retreating. Just then a burst of grapeshot from Knox's guns rattled in the branches of the tree, and all the British troops nearby laughed at Howe's own discomfiture.

During the Germantown conflict there occurred a high- or low-spot in the military career of Knox. The Americans had the British on the run and victory seemed in sight, when it was discovered that Colonel Musgrave and four companies of British infantry had ensconced themselves in a large stone residence known as the Chew House. From the second-story windows of the structure, Musgrave's men now poured a peppery fire upon the advancing troops of Generals Maxwell, Wayne, and Sullivan, finally diverting them to cover, from which they tried to return the fire. Washington considered this situation so serious that he held a staff conference about it. Adjutant General Pickering and others felt the Chew House should be by-passed. Knox disagreed. He quoted Marshall Saxe that no army should leave an enemy in its rear. Washington accepted this view and ordered Knox to

reduce the obstacle, whereupon the elated artillery commander turned loose his 3- and 6- pounder guns on it but their projectiles bounced off the sturdy stone building like tennis balls. Some officers tried to slip up and set fire to the house, but one was shot down. Again the American artillery opened up, again it failed. Maxwell added his musketry but this only succeeded in knocking out the windows and doors. Still the barricaded British hotly fired back. By now a rumor grew among the delayed Continentals that a hostile force was assailing them from the rear, and the Chew House situation added to the confusion, so that eventually a general retreat which no one could explain resulted. As the *Independent Chronicle* stated, "They fled when no man pursued." Even so, in his subsequent report to Congress about the indecisive battle, Washington, unlike some of his staff, did not blame Knox and the Chew House, but other factors.

At Valley Forge, Knox was kept busy at his artillery headquarters not only with the human hardships but with his artillery horses which, with no voices to complain, died by the hundreds from cold and starvation. Generals Greene, Wayne, and Conway and Colonels Hamilton and Pickering, in their misery, adversely criticized Washington. But in all the long war from Boston to Yorktown, never did the loyal Henry Knox lift his voice against his chief. At this time, Knox astutely found some official business to transact northward, and obtained permission from Washington to visit his wife in Boston, where he stayed for several weeks on this not-unpleasant semi-military mission.

A story is told that after Knox returned to Valley Forge, he and a Colonel Sargent were sent to the New York legislature to explain the hardships the army was undergoing. Looking at the two officers, a member of the legislature is said to have remarked that he had never seen a fatter man than Knox nor a better-dressed one than Sargent. Whereupon, Sargent replied that out of respect to the law-makers, the army had sent its only member with an ounce of superfluous flesh and the only other one with a complete suit of clothes.

"MONTPELIER," THE KNOXES' HOME AT THOMASTON, MAINE, 1796–1806

By Charles Copeland

Owned by Mr. William W. Cross

Spring came to Valley Forge and so did Lucy Knox. She and her husband lived in a spacious stone house near Valley Creek, its living room larger than that of the George Washingtons. Mrs. Knox was always a social leader, and often she and Martha Washington and the wives of other officers would gather in the Knox house to knit socks and sew clothing for the soldiers.

In a Council of War, Washington asked the advice of his generals on the advisability of attacking the British in Philadelphia. Varying opinions were given, that of Knox being against such an attack because of the probable losses involved. Left alone, the British would evacuate the city anyway, the artillery commander believed. And on the very day that Knox wrote this recommendation, June 18, 1778, the British did evacuate Philadelphia. There followed the Battle of Monmouth, the longest and, from the standpoint of the weather, hottest battle of the Revolution. The results of von Steuben's drilling of the infantry and of Knox's training of the artillerymen at Valley Forge were evident in this battle. A single cannon ball is said to have knocked the

muskets from all of the men in one British platoon. Washington thought so much of the performance of the artillery during that blistering day, that he complimented it in general orders.

At the court-martial which was later held in which General Charles Lee was tried for making his strange and unfortunate retreat, Knox testified, and mostly in Lee's favor. The artillery commander was present when Washington met Lee on his rearward march, and although Knox heard the commander-in-chief express his displeasure to Lee, there was no swearing, according to Knox. This contrasts with several accounts of Washington's anger and profanity at this crucial moment. In fact Knox thought Lee "perfectly master" of himself at the time, and, unlike several others, never entirely condemned him for the retreat. Sometimes Knox was generous-hearted to an extreme degree. He and Mrs. Knox knew Benedict Arnold socially and refused to believe he was treacherous, until finally convinced by Arnold's desertion to the enemy.

In the winter of 1779 when the Continentals were encamped at Pluckemin in New Jersey, Knox established an artillery park which he called "the academy" and which might be termed a forerunner of the U.S. Military Academy. At Pluckemin the big guns were arranged in a line, with huts for the personnel in an opposite line, while in the center was a large building elevated above the others. Here Knox, as "preceptor to the park gave military lessons" from an elevated platform in the main room of the central building. These lessons were soon to be put to good use.

The Chevalier de Chastellux, a general on the staff of Count de Rochambeau, wrote of his visit to the American Army in the fall of 1780, and how he and Washington and their staffs came upon the little farm home where Mrs. Knox was staying near New Windsor, Connecticut. With her were their children of that time, a boy of six months and a little girl of three years—they were to have 10 more children later, most of whom died in childhood. Chastellux described Knox himself as "very fat but very

active, gay and amiable . . . it is impossible to know him without esteeming him, to see him without loving him."

Yorktown was to be the real test of the American Army Artillery, and Knox was ready for the test. After Rochambeau and Washington had agreed on plans for moving their combined troops from Connecticut and New York to Yorktown, Knox was given the task of supervising the transportation of the main supplies. Washington felt a spirit of urgency in the situation, which of course was reflected in Knox who assured his chief that he was ready for any undertaking. In dealing with Rochambeau and his officers, Knox was of especial help because he had read French from boyhood and apparently could speak it to some extent. Having arrived at Chesapeake Bay, Washington and Knox paid a visit to Count de Grasse, the French admiral, aboard his flagship, in order to coordinate plans of army and fleet. As the 6-foot-3-inch Washington reached the quarter-deck, the even taller French admiral rushed to greet him, and in typical style, kissed him on each cheek.

"My dear little general!" exclaimed de Grasse, and the aides tittered. But Henry Knox could not restrain his mirth, and laughed until his portly sides shook.

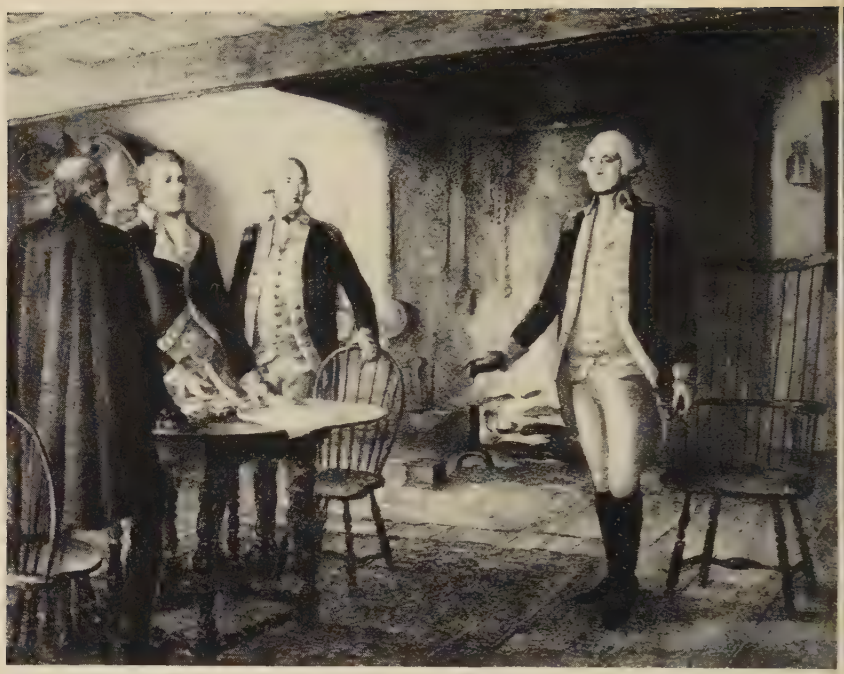
At Yorktown, Knox gave orders that ricochet firing was to be practiced by the artillery. By this method, shells bounced along the ground, cutting off legs etc. Each officer was to aim his own field piece. Strict silence was to prevail during operations; deserters were to be instantly hanged. October 9, 1781, dawned bright and clear. The heavy guns of the French and American allies were ready, the batteries aligned side by side in siege lines. Washington was walking with Knox for a last-minute inspection of the artillery, when he paused at a fat cannon and looked at it longingly. Knox had probably wished to fire the first shot himself, but evidently sensing what was in Washington's mind, he picked up a torch and handed it to the commander-in-chief who touched it to the cannon barrel—and the first shot of the Battle of Yorktown rammed into the British lines. It is said to have de-

capitated the British Commissary General and wounded three of his companions.

The study of military-theory books and the planning and practice which Knox had done in building his artillery now paid off. Cornwallis himself was almost hit by a shell as he ducked under a cliff. British ships in the harbor were struck and burned, the French guns doing their part of the damage. Lafayette exclaimed, however, that the American artillery fired better than the French. The desperate Cornwallis sent men over on October 15th to spike the opposing guns, but with little success. Two days later, the proud British general surrendered. In reporting the happy event to Congress, Washington said of Knox: "The resources of his genius supplied the deficit of means." A month later, he recommended Knox for promotion to major general.

At the end of the war, Knox, now wearing two stars, succeeded Washington as commander of the army, living with his wife and family near West Point. When the commander-in-chief took leave of his officers on December 4, 1783, at Fraunces Tavern in New York City, his heart was full. Some of these old wartime comrades he was never to see again. "I cannot come to each of you," he said brokenly, "but I shall feel obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand." Henry Knox was the first to come, and fittingly so; his own eyes filled with tears. Washington took his hand and as he did so, looked into his eyes and was so overcome that he threw his arms around Knox and kissed him on the cheek. Both wept but neither said a word.

Henry Knox was made Secretary at War under the Confederation government and served notably in this capacity until the Federal Constitution was formed. His salary was $2,450 a year. He laid plans for a national militia, some of which are still followed, but his designation of the military force was a "legion," after the Roman units. His ideas for conscription are set forth in our Selective Service manuals today. Knox founded the Society of the Cincinnati, an organization of American and French Army and Navy officers, of which Washington was president



GENERALS HEATH, KNOX, AND VON STEUBEN INVITING WASHINGTON
to become president of the Cincinnati, Newburgh, N.Y., May 20, 1783

Litho by George L. Nelson for Washington's Headquarters Museum, Newburgh

and Knox secretary. Its purpose was mainly to perpetuate the wartime comradeships, although it was accused by some of being an aristocratic, power-hungry organization more typical of a monarchy than a republic. Continued through the eldest sons of the officers and their descendants, the Society of the Cincinnati actively exists today, with some 2,000 members, about the same number as at its inception.

Knox was a strong Federalist and, as Secretary at War, was quite active in connection with the Shays' Rebellion, which his equally conservative friend, General Benjamin Lincoln, and the Massachusetts militia—aided by national government supplies and encouragement from Knox—suppressed. From this abortive effort of the working class to get relief from heavy taxes did come some reform in the State laws, however. Secretary and Mrs. Knox

were fond of gaiety and of aristocratic social life and were soon living beyond his salary. So he supplemented this by borrowing and from an estate his wife had inherited in what is now Maine. Disappointed in the weaknesses of the Confederation, Knox, along with others, submitted his idea of a strong Federal Government to Washington before the latter went to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, a plan which the Chief Executive-to-be found worthy of praise.

When Washington was elected President, he retained Knox who now became Secretary *of* War and served for almost six years. His combined service in the national government was longer than that of Washington, Jefferson, or Hamilton. In the cabinet, Knox usually sided with Hamilton. In the summer of 1793, a yellow fever plague struck Philadelphia, then the nation's capital. Of the cabinet members, Knox was the last to leave the city, having served for a time as Acting President after Washington made his exit. The Navy was under the War Department from 1789 to 1798 so that Knox also supervised this department and in a way could be called our first "Secretary of Defense." He laid plans for building the first six frigates of the new nation. Perhaps his greatest achievement as Secretary of War was his admirable handling of the Indian problems, under the leadership of Washington of course. Knox negotiated lasting treaties with the Southern Indians, and supervised the unsuccessful Harmar and St. Clair expeditions against the Indians in the West, but finally was rewarded for his persistence by Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, which opened the West for settlement.

After resigning as Secretary of War, Knox went home with his family to their estate in Maine in the spring of 1795. Here he lived on a 30-mile-square tract of land, in baronial splendor, speculating in more land, beset by debts and well-meaning visitors. Called back by Washington to military service when war with France threatened in 1798, Knox refused to serve under Alexander Hamilton, who had been a captain when Knox was a general. Loved and renowned, Knox died in 1806 a few days after swallowing a chicken bone.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR (1830–1886), PRESIDENT, 1881–1885

Portrait by Henry R. Rittenberg, 1944

The New-York Historical Society

PRESIDENT ARTHUR'S DOMESTIC LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

by JOHN S. GOFF

Assistant Professor of History, West Texas State College

CHESTER Alan Arthur is today one of the virtually forgotten Presidents of the United States. If remembered at all, it is as the spoilsman-politician, who once in the White House, changed his ways and became respectable. It is true, undoubtedly, that many Americans shared the views of the New York politician who is supposed to have cried, "My God, Chet Arthur President!" when he heard that Garfield had died after long-suffering. That was September 19, 1881, and the next day Vice President Arthur was sworn in as President. Arthur occupied the Presidency for three and a half years and when, on March 4, 1885, he retired to private life, the nation's fears regarding him had been dispelled and the New Yorker received general commendation from his fellow citizens. His period as an ex-President was a short one, for Chester Arthur died November 18, 1886, after a long illness, only to be promptly forgotten. The verdict of history—he was an average President.

President Arthur, during his tenure as Chief Executive, submitted to Congress four annual messages containing reviews of the past year and his recommendations for the forthcoming twelve-month period. These are rather remarkable documents if for no other reason than that they are models of clarity and brevity. In addition, however, their contents are extremely interesting and should make one wonder whether or not history's verdict regarding Arthur is correct. Those portions of his messages which dealt with foreign affairs contain nothing of moment. It is in regard to domestic matters that Arthur made his contributions. Some of the stands he took are rather well known:

the tariff and civil service, for example; but on other matters—Federal aid to education, civil rights, conservation, and railroad regulation—his views are not at all remembered. By examining his recommendations on these matters one can obtain a better appreciation of Chester Arthur's work as President.

In each of Arthur's annual messages he reported a sizable surplus in the Federal treasury. In the first two messages he suggested the repeal of all internal taxation except excises on tobacco and liquor.[1] The next year, after noting that taxes had been reduced, he advised a "wait and see" attitude to determine the effect of the actions Congress had already taken; however, in 1884, he returned to his earlier advocacy of total repeal.[2] An important contributing factor to the treasury surplus was the high protective tariff then in force.

The President's message of December 1881 called attention to the fact that "The tariff laws also need revision; but, that a due regard may be paid to the conflicting interests of our citizens, important changes should be made with caution."[3] Further, in the event that Congress could not, during the coming session, find time to hold hearings in regard to the existing laws, he urged that a tariff commission, which the Senate had already approved, should be set to work to "lighten the labors of Congress." Congress passed no tariff legislation during the session, but did follow Arthur's alternative recommendation by authorizing the appointment of the proposed commission[4] to "take into consideration and thoroughly investigate all the various questions relating to the agricultural, commercial, mercantile, manufacturing, mining and industrial interests of the United States, so far as the same

[1] First Annual Message, December 6, 1881, in James D. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (Washington: 1897), X, 4632–36, and Second Annual Message, December 4, 1882, *ibid.*, XI, 4719–23.

[2] Third Annual Message, December 4, 1883, *ibid.*, XI, 4763–67, and Fourth Annual Message, December 1, 1884, *ibid.*, XI, 4831.

[3] *Ibid.*, X, 4636.

[4] The House on May 6, 1882, by a vote of 151 to 83, passed a slightly different version than the Senate had already approved.—*Congressional Record*, 47th Congress, 1st session, XIII, part IV, 3686–87. The Senate agreed to the House version, May 9, 1882, by a vote of 35 to 19.—*Ibid.*, 3742–43.

may be necessary to the establishment of a judicious tariff or a revision of the existing tariff, upon a scale of justice to all interests. . . ."[5] Arthur signed the bill May 15th, and the Senate confirmed his nominations to the commission June 20, 1882. As had been called for in Congressional debate it was "a commission not of owl-eyed college professors, but of business men and statesmen." Some difficulty was experienced in getting individuals to serve, because of a strong feeling that the commission would simply be wasting time in order to give the country "a little rest" from the constant debate of the tariff subject.[6] Five and one-half months later the group delivered its report and, much to the surprise of all, it called for a definite lowering of duties to the extent of approximately 25% average on all items.[7]

Undoubtedly, the Congress was the most shocked group in the country. Work was immediately begun on new laws and after lengthy debate the result was the Tariff of 1883, better known as the "mongrel tariff." Protection was sustained and, while there was some lowering of duties, the cuts were not as substantial as the commission had recommended. The principal reductions in taxation were made in the area of internal revenue. Arthur signed the bill without comment but probably with a feeling that it had not gone far enough and that he had won less than he originally contemplated. Of this law it has been said "On the whole, it may be fairly described as a half-hearted attempt on the part of those wishing to maintain a system of high protection to make some concession to a public demand for a more moderate tariff system."[8]

Of all the matters on the mind of the public when Arthur became President, the uppermost was the need for civil service

[5] *Ibid.*, 3118. This is the wording of the House version, which differed from the original Senate version only in that the upper chamber had inserted the idea of also investigating existing internal revenue laws.—*Ibid.*, 3742.

[6] *Ibid.*, 3742. See also Edward Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903), II, 203.

[7] Stanwood, *op. cit.*, II, 206.

[8] F. W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), 249.

laws. The idea, which for some time had been taken lightly as something only for reformers to discuss, was now loudly advocated in almost all quarters. In his first annual message to the Congress, Arthur called attention to his letter of the previous summer accepting the Vice-Presidential nomination, in which he had urged that:

> Original appointments should be based upon ascertained fitness. The tenure of office should be stable. Positions of responsibility should, so far as practicable, be filled by promotion of worthy and efficient officers.

The President then added: "The views expressed . . . are those which will govern my administration of the executive office." The message also indicates that he clearly saw the point at which the merit system of securing office should cease and appointive positions should begin. He noted that civil service should include all "except such as would fairly be regarded as exponents of the policy of the executive and the principles of the party."[9] A year later, in December 1882, the President noted that no civil service law had been forthcoming and again called for action. In consequence, on January 16, 1883, the famed Pendleton Act became law. Although the Act was limited in its scope, the Arthur administration saw the beginning of the merit system. In the popular view the spoilsman became champion of civil service.

Chester A. Arthur's insight into the Indian "problem" in the United States enabled him to summarize succinctly the whole history of that situation in a single sentence to the effect that "it has been easier to resort to convenient makeshifts for tiding over temporary difficulties than to grapple with the great permanent problem and accordingly the easier course has almost invariably been pursued." As a practical matter, Arthur's Indian policy was typical of the day. Expressed in broad terms it was intended "to introduce among the Indians the customs and pursuits of civilized life and gradually absorb them into the mass of our citizens, sharing their rights and holden to their responsibilities." To accomplish this end the President recommended a threefold

[9] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, X, 4647, 4649.

program: first, extension of the laws of the States and Territories to the Indian reservations; second, a severalty act; and third, "a liberal appropriation for the support of Indian schools, because of my confident belief that such a course is consistent with the wisest economy."[10] In his plan for the solution of the Indian problem, Arthur received no action from Congress. Not until the Dawes Act in 1887 did Congress act and then with no complete solution to the problem.

It was rather well known that by the early 1880s the armed forces of the United States were badly in need of modernization. Particularly was this true of the naval organization. To Arthur should go the credit for having started the "new" Navy, for while Cleveland's first administration perhaps accomplished more in terms of ships produced, it was his predecessor who got the program under way. In his first annual message to Congress, President Arthur observed: "I can not too strongly urge upon you my conviction that every consideration of national safety, economy, and honor imperatively demands a thorough rehabilitation of our Navy." A year later the Chief Executive noted that the work had begun, but not fast enough to please him. In December 1883 Arthur wrote: "I feel bound to impress upon the attention of Congress the necessity of continued progress in the reconstruction of the Navy." By the end of the administration, March 4, 1885, the work was well along but it remained for the succeeding administration to complete the task.[11]

The United States Army of the period of the 1880s was chiefly concerned with Indian problems on the frontier, but here too was ample need for modernization. The War Department, reported the President, was modernizing some of the old 10-inch smoothbore guns by converting them into 8-inch rifles by lining the barrels with "tubes of forged steel or of coiled wrought iron."[12] Not satisfied with this, the President urged appropria-

[10] *Ibid.*, X, 4642, 4643.

[11] *Ibid.*, X, 4638; XI, 4768; Leon B. Richardson, *William E. Chandler, Republican* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1940), 281–304.

[12] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, XI, 4833.

tions for the construction of new guns at the same time. That most uniquely American military institution, the State militia, also received attention from Arthur, who had once been quartermaster of the New York Militia. In 1883, he noted:

> On several occasions during the past year officers of the Army have at the request of the State authorities visited their militia encampment for inspections of the troops. From the reports of these officers I am induced to believe that the encouragement of the State militia organization by the National Government would be followed by very gratifying results, and would afford it in sudden emergencies the aid of a large body of volunteers educated in the performance of military duties.[13]

The wisdom of the President's policy cannot be denied, and yet it was not until years after Arthur's retirement that a policy of real coöperation between the two militaries would be followed.

Certain of the foregoing policies of the Arthur administration are reasonably well known. However, there exist in his annual messages certain recommendations that are today virtually forgotten although the problems remain or remained to be settled in later decades. For example, Arthur is well remembered for his veto of the River and Harbor Bill of 1882, but it is not remembered that out of this grew an interesting recommendation to the Congress for avoiding a repetition of this situation. First, Arthur posed what he considered a rhetorical question: "Is it not advisable that grants of considerable sums of money for diverse and independent schemes of national improvement should be made the subjects of separate and distinct legislative enactments?" The single-bundle appropriation system, he said, "inevitably tends to secure the success of the bill as a whole, though many of the items, if separately considered, could scarcely fail of rejection." He well knew and stated explicitly that it would be impracticable to consider each appropriation as a separate bill. Instead he offered as an alternative plan the so-called item veto, then in use in fourteen States. Congress paid no heed to this excellent suggestion then and has persistently ignored the idea ever

[13] *Ibid.*, XI, 4768.

since, although it has frequently been urged as a valuable addition to our constitutional system. Specifically, Chester Arthur called for a constitutional amendment on the subject and repeated his call twice in the following years.[14]

Within recent years there has been considerable discussion upon the topic of temporary Presidential succession in the eventuality of the incapacity of the Chief Executive. Arthur had been faced with this problem for Garfield had lingered two and a half months after the attack upon him and during that period the Presidency had for all practical purposes been vacant.[15] Of course the business of the Federal Government could be transacted at a more leisurely pace in the 1880s than now but, even though the problem was then not as pressing as it would be today, Arthur was very much interested in the matter. He posed to Congress these questions:

> What is the intendment of the Constitution in its specification of "inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office" as one of the contingencies which calls the Vice-President to the exercise of Presidential functions? Is the inability limited in its nature to long-continued intellectual incapacity, or has it broader import? What must be its extent and duration? How must its existence be established?

As has been asked on each occasion when the President of the United States has suffered from an extended illness, how is "inability" determined? Does the President himself have any voice in the matter or, as Arthur phrased it, "is the decision of that momentous and delicate question confided to the Vice-President?"[16] It was obvious in December 1881 that these questions needed to be answered by a law of Congress or by a constitutional amendment. Further, could the Vice President simply be a temporary President, or once the elected President had surrendered his office would his successor remain in the White House

[14] *Ibid.*, XI, 4725, 4774, 4840.

[15] Garfield had transacted but one minor item of business during his illness, and the Cabinet members pretended to him that there was nothing of importance that needed his attention. See Theodore C. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), II, 1195.

[16] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, X, 4652.

for the remainder of the four-year term? Arthur reminded the Congress of these problems in each of his four annual messages but failed to elicit any responsive legislation. The problem remains as perplexing now as it was three-quarters of a century ago.

A similar constitutional problem was involved in the counting of the electoral votes. The Constitution merely states that "the president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives, open all the certificates [electoral votes] and the votes shall then be counted . . . ."[17] Counted by whom? This had been the vexing problem in the famed disputed election of 1876, the difficulty being settled then by setting up an Electoral Commission. Arthur tried during his term to get the Congress to provide a solution to the problem and thus prevent any future disputed elections. In this he was unsuccessful. However, during the first Cleveland administration such a law was passed.[18]

The subject of pensions for the Union veterans of the Civil War was becoming more and more of an issue during Arthur's term. In his first annual message the New Yorker noted the large sum of money already being expended by the Federal Government. "The fact that a sum so enormous must be expended by the Government to meet demands for arrears of pensions" provided for by the enactment of 1879 "is an admonition to Congress and the Executive to give cautious consideration to any similar project in the future." In addition, Arthur anticipated the problem with which Cleveland was to struggle so valiantly, and noted: "The great temptation to the presentation of fictitious claims offered by the fact that the average sum obtained is $1300 leads me to suggest the propriety of making some special appropriation for the prevention of fraud."[19] Here the President had in mind an enlargement of the personnel of the Pension Bureau

[17] Twelfth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

[18] The Electoral Count Act, February 3, 1887, left it to the States for their decision unless the State itself should be unable to decide or has decided irregularly. Then the two Houses of Congress were to decide jointly and if unable to do so the returns certified by the Governor of the State would be final.

[19] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, X, 4645–46.

which he had earlier noted was understaffed. To this subject Congress paid no heed; instead it went right ahead passing private pension bills, some of them based on fraudulent claims.

On the subject of civil rights, the twenty-first President of the United States took a firm stand in favor of positive Federal legislation. In 1883, the Supreme Court in the Civil Rights Cases had held the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional[20] and in December of that year the President discussed the matter in his annual message to Congress. Noting that "the special purpose" of the Fourteenth Amendment was to insure to members of the colored race the full enjoyment of civil and political rights, the President pointed out that "certain statutory provisions" designed to achieve this end had been voided by the Court, and urged that this void be filled:

> Any legislation whereby Congress may lawfully supplement the guaranties which the constitution affords for the equal enjoyment by all the citizens of the United States of every right, privilege, and immunity of citizenship will receive my unhesitating approval.[21]

Again the Congress failed to act upon the recommendation.

A later New Yorker President, Theodore Roosevelt, receives and rightly deserves the credit for having initiated the first extensive Federal conservation program and for having created widespread popular interest in the subject. Yet Arthur twenty years earlier had recommended legislation upon the subject. In 1882 he noted that "the condition of the forests of the country and the wasteful manner in which their destruction is taking place give cause for serious apprehension," and called for legislation which would "secure the preservation of the valuable forests still remaining on the public domain . . . ." This call was ignored, so a year later the Chief Executive again reminded the legislators of the need of saving the forests not only for the timber involved but also for their value as watersheds in preventing floods such as the disastrous ones that had occurred in recent

[20] *Civil Rights Cases*, 109 U.S. 3 (1883).
[21] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, XI, 4775.

years.[22] Still no action came from Congress and two decades would pass before a serious conservation program would be undertaken.

In view of current discussions relative to increased Federal aid to education it is interesting to note that Arthur had no qualms about such a program. In fact, he strongly urged it. In his first annual address of December 1881, he urged that the revenue obtained from the sale of public lands be used to augment the money already being spent by the States and by local agencies. Arthur's criteria for the conditions under which Federal aid should be given was simply "when other provisions are not adequate," such aid to be "distributed in the different States according to the ratio of illiteracy, as by this means those localities which are most in need of such assistance will reap its special benefits." Arthur was troubled by the fact that "many who now exercise the right of suffrage are unable to read the ballot which they cast."[23] He saw the danger of this situation to the American form of government, but the Congress once again ignored his recommendations and nothing was done.

The Arthur administration occurred in the midst of the great era of railroad expansion following the Civil War. The railroads were then virtually the only means of transportation in this country and the nation was utterly dependent on them. The companies were then regulated only by the so-called "Granger Laws" of a few Midwestern States.[24] The President, contrary to the thinking of many in his Party, observed:

> While we cannot fail to recognize the importance of the vast railway systems of the country and their great beneficent influences upon the development of our material wealth, we should, on the other hand, remember that no individual and no corporation ought to be invested with absolute power over the interest of any other citizen or class of citizens.

Arthur was not blind to the fact that the railroads had adopted "unjust and oppressive methods" in order to "impair the ad-

[22] *Ibid.*, XI, 4731–32, 4772.
[23] *Ibid.*, X, 4645; XI, 4771.
[24] These laws, enacted at the urging of the farm population, were at first upheld by the Supreme Court particularly in *Munn* v. *Illinois*, 94 U. S. 113 (1887), but were

vantages of healthful competition and to make hurtful discriminations." While he acknowledged "the right of these railway corporations to a fair and profitable return upon their investments and to reasonable freedom in their regulations," yet it seemed to him "only just that, so far as its constitutional authority will permit, Congress should protect the people at large in their inter-state traffic against acts of injustice. . . ." In addition to recommending Federal regulation of railroads, Arthur urged also that Congress pass legislation to "exercise some sort of supervision over interstate telegraphic communication."[25] Laws for these purposes were not forthcoming from Congress in Arthur's time but a start would be made by the passage of the Cullom Act in 1887.

It becomes obvious that most of Chester A. Arthur's recommendations to the Congress fell on deaf ears. Only on a few issues was constructive legislation passed during his term. However, it is surprising how many of his ideas were later put into operation, and this in itself is a tribute to their soundness. Of course Arthur's leadership should have been stronger; he might have had his way had he pushed his program more aggressively. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how little he is remembered today even for having had the ideas he urged for adoption. Arthur is always pictured as a typical conservative Republican of the post-Civil War period, but a close examination of his principles makes it evident that he does not fit the picture. He appears to have had an excellent grasp of the problems then facing the nation, including those which were not then obvious to many, and really to have made constructive suggestions for their solution. Within relatively recent times, American historians have "re-discovered" two American Presidents, Polk and Hayes. It has been seen that they were greatly underrated and deserve a higher place in American political history. Is there now a third Chief Executive who needs to be reëvaluated? Is Chester Alan Arthur underrated by historians?

later declared invalid by the Court in the *Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railroad* v. *Illinois*, 118 U.S. 557 (1886), thus leaving the railroads entirely unregulated.

[25] James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, XI, 4731, 4770, 4772.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRACY (1830–1915)
Secretary of the Navy under President Harrison, 1889–1893
Steel engraving at The New-York Historical Society

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRACY, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 1889–1893

by John K. Mahon

Department of History, University of Florida

IT IS common knowledge that the United States Navy declined during the fifteen years following the Civil War, and that it began to revive again about 1881.[1] After that date, with a few interruptions, its revival continued vigorously through successive administrations until, when Theodore Roosevelt stepped down as President, the U.S. Navy stood second only to Great Britain's in number of capital ships.[2] Contributing to the rise of the "New Navy" was an unparalleled succession of six very able Secretaries of the Navy.[3] There have never been so many, before or since, following one after the other. Fairly adequate evaluations—or at least documents upon which evaluations can be based—have been published for four of them.[4] But nothing beyond short articles in dictionaries of American biography is in print about the other two.[5] One of these neglected Secretaries, whose

[1] See Elmer Potter and others, eds., *The United States and World Sea Power* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: 1955), 393, 394; Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power* (Princeton: 1939), 165–76; Allen Westcott, ed., *American Sea Power Since 1775* (Philadelphia: 1947), 206.

[2] Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power*, 261, 272.

[3] William H. Hunt, 1881–April 1882; William E. Chandler, 1882–1885; William C. Whitney, 1885–1889; Benjamin F. Tracy, 1889–1893; Hilary A. Herbert, 1893–1897; John D. Long, 1897–1902.

[4] Thomas Hunt, *Life of William H. Hunt* (Brattleboro, Vt.: 1922); Leon E. Richardson, *William E. Chandler* (New York: 1940); Mark D. Hirsch, *William C. Whitney, Modern Warwick* (New York: 1948); John D. Long, *The New American Navy* (2 vols.; New York: 1903); Gardner W. Allen, ed., *Papers of John Davis Long, 1897–1904* (Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, Vol. 78, Norwood, Mass., 1939); Lawrence S. Mayo, ed., *The Journal of John D. Long* (Boston: 1923).

[5] The two neglected Secretaries are Benjamin Franklin Tracy and Hilary A. Herbert. Sketches of the former appear in: *Dictionary of American Biography* (22 vols.; New York: 1928–1958), XVIII, 622, 623; *National Cyclopedia of American Biography* (41 vols.; New York: 1898–1956), I, 145.

contributions to the Service were lasting and important, was Benjamin Franklin Tracy, a distinguished New Yorker.*

Tracy was born April 26, 1830, near Owego into a family which had pioneered in south-central New York. He was educated at Owego, studied law there, and was admitted to the bar in 1851. Soon he was involved in politics. Beginning as Whig district attorney for Tioga County in 1853, the next year he organized the Republican Party in that County, and was assemblyman when the Civil War broke out. He left the Assembly to enter the Volunteer service for New York in 1862, and served so creditably that many years later he was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor. After the war he returned to the practice of law, this time in New York City. Appointed by President Johnson to be district attorney for eastern New York, he vastly increased the collection of Federal revenue in his district by stopping evasions of the excise tax on whiskey. This task occupied him until 1873 when he resumed the practice of law, now in Brooklyn. Here he became involved in his most famous case, the defense of Henry Ward Beecher against the adultery charge brought by Theodore Tilton. Called to office once more, in the early '80s he served as judge in the State Court of Appeals. His next public service was outside New York as Secretary of the Navy; but in 1893 he returned to his New York law practice and to State affairs. Still not yet done with service to the Empire State, he was chairman of the commission which drafted the Greater New York City Charter in 1897. The following year he was unsuccessful Republican nominee for mayor of the city.[6]

Benjamin F. Tracy came to the attention of President-elect Harrison because of the conflict among New York Republicans. Both Thomas C. Platt, leader of the Stalwarts, and Warner Miller, leader of the Half-breeds, expected to become Secretary

* A good frame of reference for the following study of Secretary Tracy's administration may be found in Leonard D. White, *The Republican Era: 1869-1901; A Study in Administrative History* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), particularly in the chapter on "The Navy Department," reviewed in our January 1959 *Quarterly*.

[6] *Dictionary of American Biography; National Cyclopedia. . . .*

of the Treasury, but Harrison passed over both. Hoping to appease them somewhat, he reserved the Navy Department for their State;[7] but since he could not find a man agreeable to both factions he had to delay the appointment until all the other Cabinet posts were filled. Finally, Tracy appeared as the person most likely to be acceptable. He was fifty-nine, a very successful attorney practicing in a key location, and one of the founders of the New York Republican Party. Another advantage was his Civil War rank, brevet brigadier general; moreover people usually called him "General" (a title which persisted even when he was head of the Navy).

On account of those qualifications, Harrison finally selected Tracy. It was his misfortune that the choice alienated both Platt and Miller.[8] On the other hand, it was the Navy's good fortune that the search for a man who was politically available uncovered one who was also uncommonly competent. In this case competence did not stem from experience for, like most Secretaries of the Navy since the 1840s, Benjamin F. Tracy had no nautical experience at all. He did not even sail as an avocation. His hobby had been the breeding and racing of trotting horses; but he decided his trotters had to be sold when he became a Cabinet member.

The new Secretary could have had little time at first to deal with Navy matters. Even before he took office, droves of people importuned him for jobs or for the use of his influence to secure other selfish ends. Had they merely been seeking positions in his own department it would have been one thing, but they asked for his influence, and got it, to obtain all sorts of other government positions. A soldier of the 109th New York Volunteer Infantry, which Tracy had commanded, wrote that he had nothing against his erstwhile Colonel for having reduced him to the ranks, but he would like a job or, failing that, a plug or two of

[7] Albert T. Volwiler, ed., *Correspondence between Benjamin Harrison and James G. Blaine, 1882–1893* (American Philosophical Society *Memoirs*, Philadelphia, XIV, 1940), 8.

[8] *Ibid.*

the tobacco the Army had issued during the war and which the Navy still issued aboard ship.[9] He got a couple of plugs.

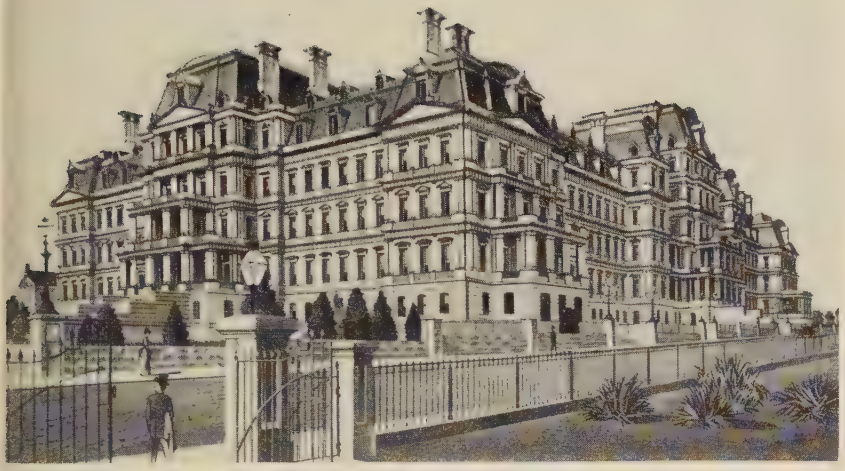
Landlubber that he was, Tracy's task was not made easier by the organization of the Navy Department. There were thirty-one clerks, stenographers, and laborers in the office of the Secretary, but no one to share the burden of civilian responsibility. The only civilian in it with any authority, Tracy represented the President, the Commander in Chief, and was supposed to make the basic decisions. But there existed no personal staff of naval officers to give him professional advice. The Admiral of the Navy, David Dixon Porter, on account of his Civil War service, was carried on the active list without any special duties; but his office had not been used as a source of counsel for the Secretary and was not by law required to fulfill such a function. Moreover, Porter was then seventy-six, known to be far behind the times, and maintained in his $12,000-a-year post ($4,000 more than the Secretary earned) not for present services rendered but for past glory.[10] He did offer advice from time to time but it was more splenetic than useful. For instance, in March 1889 he cautioned the Secretary not to appoint Francis M. Ramsay Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks. Ramsay, Porter said, would disrupt that bureau just as he had disorganized others to which he had been assigned. Once he had been reliable but had since become a "fanatical Catholic" and had changed completely.[11] Apparently the Secretary did not think the Admiral's judgment very sound, for, just seven months later, in November 1889, he appointed Ramsay to the very important post of Chief of the Bureau of Navigation.

The routine work of the Navy was done by eight bureaus. Each one was commanded by a senior officer, upon whom the Secretary of course could call for professional advice. Unfortu-

[9] George Harris to Tracy, March 11, 1889, Benjamin F. Tracy Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

[10] The salary scale is printed in the Report of the Secretary of the Navy, *House Docs.*, 51 Cong., 1st Sess., No. 1, part 3 (November 30, 1889), 51.

[11] Porter to Tracy, March 29, 1889, Tracy Papers.



STATE, WAR, AND NAVY DEPARTMENT BUILDING (BUILT 1871–1875)

Where Tracy and his Department staff had their offices, 1889–1893

Washington Album—Souvenirs. Road Masters' Association of America Convention, Washington, D.C., September 1888 (NYHS)

nately past experience indicated that he would usually get from them not a Navy view, but the provincial views of the eight bureaus. It was extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him, an inexperienced civilian, to hear eight divergent opinions on professional matters, weigh them, and arrive at a sound conclusion. Nevertheless, he had somehow to do it, or to find another way to reach sound conclusions on technical naval matters.

Since thirteen warships were being built and seven more had already been authorized when he undertook his duties, Tracy needed immediate technical help in ship construction. Accordingly, he drew the Chiefs of the Bureaus of Yards and Docks, Ordnance, Equipment and Recruiting, Construction and Repair, and Steam Engineering into a single board to supervise, and be responsible for, the planning and construction of warships.[12] In

[12] Promulgated in General Order 372, Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1889), 39.

this way he obliged the bureaus concerned with building to plan and work together and thus to forestall errors of the sort already built into the cruiser *San Francisco* which was then on the stocks. Because of the failure of the bureaus to coordinate their plans, it was found about this time (too late for correction) that the engineers on *San Francisco* would be able to reach their quarters only by crawling on hands and knees. It was also found, when she was commissioned the next year, that her coal endurance was half that specified.[13] Tracy made the Construction Board responsible for preventing like faults in the future.

He followed the same principle of unified responsibility in reorganizing the other functions of the Department. Late in June, when he had been on duty only three months, and had been distracted hour upon hour with dispensing patronage, he redistributed the work among the bureaus. The idea was to assign all related tasks to the same bureau, and the goal was to put matters pertaining to ship movements and personnel under Navigation, all those concerning supply and accounting under Provisions and Clothing (in his last year redesignated the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts), and building matters under the other affected bureaus.[14] This was an important change, long overdue.

During 1889 several warships of the new steel navy, begun under his predecessors, were put into commission. They created another professional problem: What was the best use to make of them? Once more Tracy acted with wisdom. On September 30th he caused *Chicago*, *Atlanta*, *Boston*, and *Yorktown* to be formed into a new "Squadron of Evolution" the purpose of which was to practice fleet operations.[15] As these vessels were unarmored[16] this was not a fighting fleet, but it was the first step in that direction.

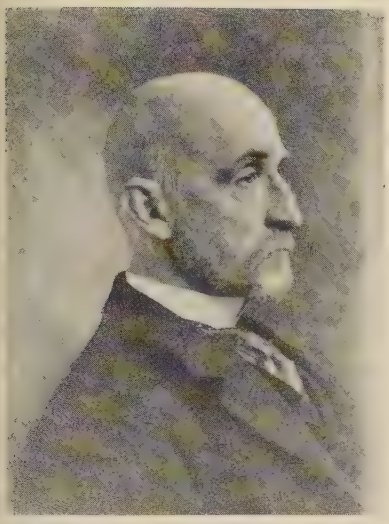
The changes actually effected were obvious improvements,

[13] Richard S. West, Jr., *Admirals of American Empire* (Indianapolis: 1948), 175–177.

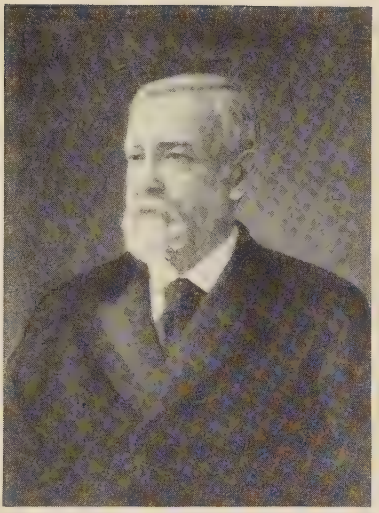
[14] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1889), 37.

[15] *Ibid.*, 35.

[16] Unarmored, as used here, means that they lacked steel plating thick and hard enough to repel projectiles from high-powered cannon.



ALFRED T. MAHAN (1840–1914)
Pres., Naval War College, 1886–93
McClure's Magazine, Jan. 1899, *frontis.*



BENJAMIN HARRISON (1833–1901)
By Henry R. Rittenberg, 1944
The New-York Historical Society

but they were not enough. More were recommended in Tracy's first annual report. That document, sent to the President a short nine months after the Secretary took office, was a model of insight and planning.[17] It reflected the fact that somehow, during his short tenure, the new civilian head had been converted to a modified version of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's doctrine of sea power. This had occurred even though Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power Upon History* was still a few months away from publication. Tracy thus became the first high-placed civil official to reject the hoary American naval strategy of coast defense and commerce raiding, and to substitute for it the idea of control of the seas.[18]

Certain statements in the first report have a twentieth-century tone. One of them was that the only navy which could exempt the nation from war was one prepared to wage war. "Naval wars in the future," the Secretary added, "will be short and sharp. It

[17] Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, 207.
[18] West, *Admirals of American Empire*, 146.

is morally certain that they will be fought out to the end with the force available at the beginning. The nation that is ready to strike the first blow will gain an advantage which its antagonist can never offset, and inflict an injury from which he can never recover."[19] After this warning he presented his plea for a fighting fleet, or rather for two, one for the Pacific Ocean and one for the Atlantic. The total he proposed was 20 battleships, divided between the two oceans, plus 20 vessels for coast defense, and 60 cruisers for preying upon enemy commerce.[20] These proposed 100 vessels were a sharp contrast to the existing fleet of 10 iron or steel warships, most of them unarmored; 8 more of the same being built, only one of them a battleship, and that second-rate; 5 monitors being built and 13 of them "in ordinary"; 31 wooden warships, and a miscellany of harmless sailing ships, tugboats, and the like. The existing fleet reflected the period of decay from which the Navy was just beginning to recover, while Tracy's proposal reflected Mahan's concept of sea power. How this proposal was partially implemented later in his administration will become apparent below.

The Secretary likewise pointed out the deficiency which existed in torpedo boats. He listed fifteen nations which had them, ranging from England with 207 to Brazil with 15, and then dryly stated that the United States had just one, and it not yet completed.[21]

Having urged Congress to provide the nation with modern warships, he turned his attention to the men who must operate them. The problem has a modern ring. Apprentices were enrolled in those days when very young and allowed to leave the Navy if they desired when they reached maturity. "The government," the Secretary said, "educates them as boys to lose their services as men." This drain of trained personnel ought to be corrected, he said, by requiring the trainees to remain in service longer after reaching maturity. He also urged a tour of four years

[19] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1889), 5.
[20] *Ibid.*, 11, 12.
[21] *Ibid.*, 13.

instead of three for sailors. Next came the question of aliens, since these made up a large proportion of the total of enlisted men. Expressing the native Americanism of the time, Tracy stated flatly that the nation could not afford to man its new steel navy with polyglot crews whose loyalty was questionable. It was necessary instead to attract citizens into the service, but this could be done only by making service more attractive. The first logical step was to provide retirement pay for thirty years of faithful enlisted duty. The men of the Army and Marine Corps had enjoyed this benefit since 1885, and there seemed no just reason to withhold it from the sailors.[22]

Since the first annual report set many of the objectives of Tracy's administration, certain additional requests made therein deserve notice. Among these was his suggestion that Congress enact a law to encourage a naval militia, and thus to provide some sort of reserve for the Navy. At the Secretary's continued urging, Congress passed such an act on March 2, 1891. It provided $25,000 a year to aid the State naval militias—too small a sum but one which did give a boost to the militias of the largest coastal States. Also, in order to bring some sort of pattern into the naming of war vessels, Tracy proposed that battleships be named for States and cruisers for cities. This system was adopted and is still in use.[23]

Of far greater significance, the Secretary made it clear that he desired independence and a favored position for the Naval War College. In the five years of its existence that school had been fighting for its life. During the Whitney administration, it had been merged with the Torpedo Station—with which it had no logical relationship except that it was in the same location—and was thus in danger of being smothered in an unfriendly medium.[24] To a degree at this time the College was dependent upon its president, Alfred Thayer Mahan. Accordingly, it was threatened

[22] *Ibid.*, 23, 24.
[23] *Ibid.*, 25, 33.
[24] Hirsch, *William C. Whitney*, 339.

when the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation ordered Mahan to sea. But Tracy overruled the chief both to sustain the college and to give the naval scholar the leisure to study and write.[25] Tracy and Mahan between them were able to keep the school alive, but they could not split it away from the Torpedo Station.

Quite apart from his tasks as head of the Navy, Tracy continued day after day to function as one of the heads of the party in power. Applications for positions, as before, made up the bulk of his mail; but in addition powerful people urged him to use his influence in their behalf. For example, a body of them requested that he interfere in favor of General Sigel's son who had pleaded guilty to misappropriating pension funds.[26] Since influence and politics were by no means rare in the service itself, letters concerning officers, or from them, swelled the volume of mail. Senator Cameron, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, wanted leniency for Lieutenant Commander Book who had left his ship without leave.[27] One lieutenant persuaded five Congressmen to ask the Secretary to grant him a year's leave. Retired officers interested themselves in party politics. Thus Rear Admiral Charles Steedman wrote that Rear Admiral Harmony ought not to be reappointed as Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks because he was one of "the most pronounced Democrats in the service."[28] In all such cases the Secretary refused to do anything he felt would damage the Service over which he presided.

Benjamin F. Tracy's second year in the Navy, 1890, was filled with an unusual number of significant accomplishments. Because his work load was so heavy the Secretary asked Congress to revive the office of Assistant Secretary which had been discontinued in 1869. Congress, at the time in a benign mood toward

[25] Albert T. Volwiler, "Harrison, Blaine, and American Foreign Policy, 1889–1893," (American Philosophical Society *Proceedings*, Philadelphia, LXXIX, 1938), 638.

[26] Telegram, James McLeer and others to Tracy, March (no date), Tracy Papers.

[27] Cameron to Tracy, April 8, 1889, Tracy Papers.

[28] Steedman to Tracy, March 27, 1889, Tracy Papers.

the Navy, complied.[29] Tracy filled the post wisely. James R. Soley, his appointee, had been a professor at the Naval Academy for many years, knew the Service well, and had positive ideas about what would be good for it. When he took office on July 16, 1890, he began to impress his views upon his chief. Soon matters relating to the labor force ashore became his special responsibility, and his impact in this field, as will be noted later, was immense.[30]

Another accomplishment of the second year was to perfect a system by which the eight bureaus might coordinate their purchases. Inaugurated by Secretary Whitney, the plan was still only on paper. Although a central pool of supplies did exist, the bureaus, reluctant to draw from it, acquired stocks of their own. As a result, excess quantities of equipment of the sort used by all the bureaus lay depreciating here and there at the very time when more of the same was being purchased. This waste so annoyed Tracy that he persuaded Congress to pass an act making all purchases the property of the Navy, not of the individual bureaus. Thereafter the inducement to hoard supplies was less.[31]

Early in 1890 the Secretary made a start toward resolving one of the persistent problems of naval administration: the need of the Secretary, a civilian, to have regular professional advice. He appointed a board of officers to make recommendations concerning the policy of the Department. Although this board did not become permanent, it can be called the forerunner of the General Board which came into being ten years later, and which did persist. Permanent or not, the "Policy Board" made an important contribution during the year; it helped shape the program of ship-building which the Department presented to Congress and

[29] Charles O. Paullin, "A Half Century of Naval Administration," (U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, Annapolis, XXXIX, 1913), 735.

[30] *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVII, 392.

[31] Report of the Secretary of the Navy, *House Docs.*, 51 Cong., 1st Sess., No. 1, part 3 (December 10, 1892), 55; Act of June 30, 1890, *U.S. Statutes at Large*, XXVI, 205.

vigorously advocated. That program was the outstanding achievement of this remarkable year.

Prior to 1890 Congress had authorized but one battleship, *Texas*, a second-rate of 6,300 tons carrying two 12-inch guns and six 6-inch (not yet completed). How startling then was the authorization on June 30th of three battleships all at once, every one more powerful than *Texas*. Each had a tonnage of 10,200 and was armed with four 13-inch, eight 8-inch, and four 6-inch cannon. The three were among the heaviest-armed and also the heaviest-armored war vessels anywhere in the world.[32] But they were not among the fastest or farthest ranging. The Department could not bring itself yet to recommend the building of true ocean-ranging battleships, for this was too radical a departure from the time-honored strategy of coast defense and commerce raiding. The new warships, *Indiana*, *Massachusetts*, and *Oregon*, were designed instead to dominate the waters near the United States, and their mission in time of war was to destroy all enemy bases close to American shores.[33] Once they had done this, Tracy and his advisors believed, no Power could operate enough warships based in Europe to harm the United States seriously. Since the new battleships did not need great speed and range for their mission, they were designed to attain middle speeds, 15½ to 17 knots, and to have a coal endurance of 5,000 miles.[34] The three were designated "sea-going coast line" battleships. Their characteristics and this designation reveal that they were products of a moment when American policy was shifting gradually from an old strategy to a new.

In addition to the battleships, Congress authorized one cruiser, later named *Columbia*, with capabilities which Secretary Tracy thought revolutionary. Possessing speed enough to overhaul any

[32] Donald W. Mitchell, *History of the Modern American Navy from 1883 . . .* (New York: 1946), 20.

[33] Report of the Navy Policy Board, *Senate Docs.*, 51 Cong., 1st Sess., No. 43 (January 21, 1890), 7; George T. Davis, *A Navy Second to None* (New York: 1940), 98.

[34] Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, 33.

large vessel, heavy cannon and strong armor, she was yet to have sufficient coal endurance to steam around the world without having to recoal. Although some critics said the Secretary was infatuated, he claimed that six cruisers such as this one could sweep the commerce of any nation off the seas.[35]

Why was Congress at this time willing to abandon the traditional strategy of coast defense and commerce raiding and, by means of three transitional battleships, move some distance toward Mahan's concept of sea power? Tracy, for one, deserves some credit because he accepted Mahan's doctrine, modified to suit American conditions, and worked to sell it to Congress.[36] President Harrison, too, is entitled to credit since he favored a strong Navy. Next, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas B. Reed, gave the legislation very powerful assistance through the House.[37] Also, the chairmen of the naval committees in both houses, Senator James D. Cameron and Congressman Charles A. Boutelle, added their aid. But pressing these men to do as they did was the general climate of feeling and thought in America: an interest in empire, a strident nationalism, and a new sense of manifest destiny. The Navy was naturally involved when such a spirit was dominant. Last but not least was the existence of a surplus in the national treasury. The Harrison administration was committed to the highest tariff up to that time, a tariff which created surplusses year after year. As a result it had to find legitimate and popular ways to spend the troublesome funds.

Three years before Tracy, the Navy had ordered the first steel armor for its new ships. That same year, 1886, Congress had directed that the materials going into the New Navy must be of American manufacture. This created a dilemma because not so much as one armor manufactory existed in the country. To stimulate one, Secretary Whitney in 1887 entered into a gene-

[35] Report of the Secretary of the Navy, *House Docs.*, 51 Cong., 2d Sess., No. 1, part 3 (November 26, 1890), 14, 15.

[36] *Ibid.*, 11, 14.

[37] Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, 36.

rous contract with Bethlehem Iron Company. Deliveries were to commence early in 1890, but when that time came the company could not comply. Even as late as 1891, when *Texas* and *Maine*, authorized in 1886, were ready for their armor, it was not ready for them. Secretary Tracy, having inherited the problem, wrote very sternly to the company, refusing to renew the contract unless strict penalties were included, but this did not produce the armor.[38] Then, as recommended by the Policy Board, he began to try to interest another supplier. As a result, in November 1890 he signed a contract with Carnegie, Phipps and Company for 6,000 tons of armor plate. The experience with Bethlehem was now repeated. Delivery was to commence in fifteen months, but at the end of that time the Carnegie Company could not deliver. Its failure, and other irregularities, led Congress to investigate the Carnegie contracts after Tracy was out of office. It speaks well for the ex-Secretary that, although the inquiry was conducted by a Democratic Congress and the company found guilty of bad practice, there was no suggestion that the ex-Secretary had behaved other than honorably in making the contracts.[39]

Part of the armor story is the active interest of the Secretary in efforts to improve the naval qualities of steel plate. Early in 1889 he learned of the use of nickel in steel to make harder alloy.[40] This prompted him to purchase blocks of nickel steel in England and to cause them to be tested in September 1890. Since they were found to withstand gunfire better than other kinds, Tracy got the cooperative Fifty-first Congress to vote $1,000,000 for the purchase of nickel, which was not then mined in the United States.[41] Later experiments with the "Harvey Process" of hardening steel were undertaken and when they proved successful that

[38] Tracy to Bethlehem Iron Company, October 10, 1892, Tracy Papers.
[39] Violations of Armor Contracts, *House Reports*, 54 Cong., 2d Sess., No. 1468 (August 23, 1894).
[40] Tracy to S. J. Ritchie, March 7, 1892, Tracy Papers.
[41] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1890), 20.

BUILDING THE BATTLESHIP "MAINE"

Oil painting by Carlton T. Chapman

The New-York Historical Society

process was also incorporated into the production of armor for the new vessels.[42]

The great year ended with the Democrats winning control of the House and coming within eight of dominating the Senate. It happened that the Democratic leaders were as eager as the opposition to strengthen the Navy, but they were not willing to see it done under a Republican administration.[43] In consequence, the building program slowed down until in 1891 only one warship, a protected cruiser, was authorized. The Secretary thought

[42] For elementary information concerning the Harvey Process see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1957 ed., vol. 11.

[43] Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, 190.

it important, just then, to point out that weakness invites aggression, and that there was a long time-lag between authorization and completion of a ship.[44] Congress's response was just one more battleship and one armored cruiser while Tracy was in office. This battleship, *Iowa*, had slightly lighter guns than the "sea-going coast line" battleships of 1890, but greater coal capacity. It was inching away from the restricted type of 1890 toward the ocean rangers of later years.

Despite the slackening in building which occurred midway through his administration, Tracy was proud of the additions to the Navy while he was in office. In his last report, dated December 10, 1892, he recorded the total: 19 warships completed and 18 to be completed within a year if armor was ready for them. Very important too, he said, were acts sponsored by the Department to give the Service a reserve of ships if war came. One such directed that priority for mail contracts be awarded to vessels which could be converted to war use. The second permitted American-owned ships, capable of wartime conversion and operating under foreign flags, to shift easily to American registration. Not very successful was the Secretary's attempt to add torpedo boats to the fleet; only three were acquired while he was in office. But the case of torpedoes themselves was different. When he commenced his duties the United States had not had a workable torpedo, but at the end 100 Whitehead torpedoes were on order.[45]

Tracy was not especially successful in improving the lot of naval personnel, but he tried hard. To benefit the enlisted sailors he sought to obtain three-quarters pay for those who retired after thirty years of service; however, that benefit was not extended to Navy men until 1899, ten years after he had first proposed it. One reason for the reluctance of Congress to do for sailors what was done for soldiers and marines was the fact that the Navy had been operating a restricted pension system since the 1850s. To

[44] Report of the Secretary of the Navy, *House Docs.*, 52 Cong., 1st Sess., No. 1, part 3 (December 3, 1891), 32.

[45] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1892), 3–6.

THE BATTLESHIP "IOWA"

Oil painting by W. E. Laragh, 1898

The New-York Historical Society

benefit officers he attempted to relieve the stagnation in promotions. Officers on the average remained lieutenants until they were fifty-four; then caromed through the higher ranks in the eight years remaining before their enforced retirement. Having spent two or three decades as lieutenants, they were not qualified to handle the responsibilities of the upper grades. Tracy tackled this stagnation as early as 1890, and the next year appointed a board to study it. The board recommended, and he endorsed, the solution the Army had already adopted: modify seniority so that the President selected those men best qualified for general and flag grades.[46] But this change, like retirement of enlisted men, had to wait until 1899.

It was in the hiring of civilian employees to work in Navy yards that Secretary Tracy made one of his lasting reforms. When he took office, civilian positions were used altogether for political patronage. At first he accepted the system without

[46] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1891), 38–43.

question. For example, early in his term, when a clerkship fell vacant in the Mare Island Yard, he asked the Republican Congressman of the Mare Island district to name the replacement.[47] A lifelong politician, he knew well how important patronage was to the operation of American party machinery. Yet, by early 1891, he had made up his mind to eliminate politics from the yard positions. Why did he change? The *Army and Navy Register*[48] credited the bureau chiefs and Assistant Secretary Soley with persuading him. The *New York Herald*[49] opined that he did it only after consultation with important politicians who favored the change in private because they believed that the fight over yard jobs cost them more votes than it gained. Others hinted that the Republican Party, appraising the defeat of 1890 in the congressional elections, detected a need to make some gestures in the direction of reform. Ever since President Garfield's death, the curbing of patronage had been one of the most popular reforms; so what better place to start than in the Navy yards?

Secretary Tracy himself said, in a speech before the Republicans of Boston on April 8, 1891, that his motive was the improvement of the Service. The new system was not civil service, but a Navy-operated substitute. Foremen would be chosen by a competitive examination open to all applicants and conducted by a board of naval officers. The examination would call for practical knowledge of the job at issue and not book learning. As for laborers, these would be drawn from a list made up by the same board of officers as examined the foremen. Whenever the departmental foremen needed workmen they would request a list from the board, specifying the number. The latter in turn would take that number from the top of the list and transmit it. The foremen then would be obliged to give every man two weeks' trial, and only after that might they discharge any who could not do the work.[50]

[47] Tracy to the Honorable J. McKenna, July 17, 1889, Tracy Papers.
[48] (Washington, D. C.), April 11, 1891.
[49] April 5, 1891.
[50] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1891), 53–55.

There was no public disapproval of the plan. Democratic newspapers made light, not of the idea, but of the seriousness of its intention, alleging that it was really only a gesture which the Republicans did not intend to make work.[51] The *Brooklyn Eagle*[52] asked why Tracy had waited until his term was half over to make such a move. Most papers reported some indignation among the ward politicians around the yards. But even among them opinion must have been sharply divided. To illustrate, a certain Frank Woodruff, who had been Tracy's most active correspondent concerning patronage in the Brooklyn Yard, tried at once to get the county Republican organization to endorse what the Secretary had done. But the party workers in that county did not give the endorsement until much later.[53]

Tracy's correspondence shows that he personally watched the opposition press for reported violations and then demanded the facts from the yard officials.[54] Assistant Secretary Soley, for his part, put in nearly full time travelling from yard to yard checking on alleged violations. Such determined enforcement naturally resulted in intense pressure from the Party during the presidential election of 1892. It was necessary to explain to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee how the system worked, and to show, from the record, that it was not favoring Democrats. If Democrats were being hired, Tracy concluded dryly, it was because they were better qualified than Republicans to do the work.[55] Even the President was worried about a report that 240 Democrats had been hired at the Brooklyn Yard within six weeks. Tracy showed him that only forty-seven souls, of whatever party, had been taken on there in that time.[56]

In any event the election of 1892 was the first in which the

[51] For example see the *Brooklyn Citizen*, March 9, 1891.
[52] April 14, 1891.
[53] Reported in the *New York World*, April 15, 1891.
[54] For examples see Tracy to Commandant, New York Navy Yard, June 29, 1891; Tracy to Commandant, Norfolk Navy Yard, July 30, 1891; Tracy to Charles O'Neil, Inspector of Ordnance, Washington Navy Yard, March 9, 1892, Tracy Papers.
[55] Tracy to Thomas Carter, September 28, 1892, Tracy Papers.
[56] Tracy to the President, September 29, 1892, Tracy Papers.

Navy yards were not active centers of political manipulation. Although the new system was excellent naval policy it was bad politics, and it contributed a little to the losses the Republican Party sustained in the election. But it survived all pressure, then and thereafter, and remained, with subsequent modifications, a monument to Secretary Tracy.

As the Secretary pointed out when he publicly justified the political neutralization of the yards, modern warships were too complex to be built by laborers whose only qualifications were political service. In the days of wooden ships a laborer needed only to handle everyday carpenter's tools, but not in the era of steam, steel, and electricity. For example, *San Francisco* had thirty-seven engines on board besides those which drove the propellers. Since some vessels were built in Navy yards, and many repaired there, it was necessary to set aside all considerations except skill in procuring workers. Secretary Chandler, only a few years before, had said that steam engines could never be built in the Navy yards because of the limitations of the skill of the labor, but Tracy noted with pride that these were being built and repaired there with the new non-political hands.[57]

After the reform in the yards, a very firm tone entered the correspondence of the Office of the Secretary with those who sought favors. The Secretary wrote to Eugene Hale, the most powerful member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, that he ought to call for the evidence in a certain court-martial before he committed himself too strongly to support the man in jeopardy.[58] The Assistant Secretary informed Senator Quay that a protégé of his could be hired only ". . . if competent and if his services were needed . . . . That is the best I can do in view of outstanding orders."[59] A similar letter went to none other than Senator Hiscock of Tracy's own New York State.[60] When Senator

[57] Report of the Secretary of the Navy (1892), 50, 51.
[58] Tracy to Hale, September 8, 1891, Tracy Papers.
[59] Soley to Quay, August 31, 1891, Tracy Papers.
[60] Soley to Hiscock, August 31, 1891, Tracy Papers.

Allison of Iowa interceded for a lieutenant who apparently was ill in the tropics and wanted to be home in Iowa, the Secretary replied that he could keep the young man out of the tropics, but could not appoint him to be Navy inspector of ships at Dubuque (where a gunboat was being built) because the lieutenant was not qualified for that type of work.[61]

Be it remembered that Tracy, in addition to being one of the heads of the Party, and civilian head of the Navy, was also a member of the Administration. At the start of the term hardly known to Benjamin Harrison, he became in a short time one of two or three of the President's most trusted advisors.[62] Presumably his advice was sought on most important matters, but the Tracy papers in the Library of Congress show his reactions on only two of the great issues of the era: free coinage of silver and the spending of the surplus for pensions to veterans. He did not favor free coinage, but it is not known how he felt specifically about the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. As for military pensions, granted in profusion during the Harrison term, his thought is novel. He pointed out that the Administration had reduced the amount of interest paid to bondholders in proportion as it had raised pensions. In the past, he said, the government had placed first the obligation to people of money, the bondholders, but the Harrison regime had advanced the obligation due to soldiers ahead of it.[63]

His expressed views on other internal questions seem somewhat naïve. In his yard-reform speech of April 8th he reviewed the accomplishments of the Administration. Its greatest achievements, he said, were the Meat Inspection Act which stimulated exports by outlawing the shipment of diseased livestock and meat; the Anti-lottery Act forbidding the use of the mails for lottery purposes; and the shipping acts which, as has been noted,

[61] Tracy to Allison, October 8, 1891, Tracy Papers.

[62] Volwiler, *Correspondence Between Benjamin Harrison and James G. Blaine*, 145n; Volwiler, "Harrison, Blaine and American Foreign Policy," 638.

[63] Reported by the *Boston Herald*, April 9, 1891.

were framed to provide a reserve of ships in case of war.[64] Seen from the vantage point of the 1950s, these enactments do not seem of equal stature with others passed during the Administration: the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, the Sherman Anti-trust Act, and the McKinley Tariff.

The Secretary was in closer touch with foreign than internal affairs, for some of them involved the Navy. One Samoan crisis had just passed and another was taking form. In Latin America Chile was in the midst of a revolution which threatened to disrupt United States' relations. Since Secretary of State James G. Blaine was ill, Tracy aided the President and the assistant secretaries to write most of the dispatches concerning that distracted country.[65] Blaine was back on duty when a mob of Chileans killed an American sailor, and wounded others, on shore leave from USS *Baltimore*. War seemed imminent with Tracy in a key role. He gave permission for Commander Robley D. Evans to replace Captain Winfield Scott Schley on the scene, and ordered the formation of a strategy board, with Mahan and Soley on it, to prepare plans of operations for war with Chile, if it came.[66] Throughout, he insisted that the officers maintain a strict neutrality between the two factions in Chilean politics. All the while he used the "*Baltimore*" incident to publicize at home the ever more important role of the Navy.[67]

Likewise, Secretary Tracy was a central figure in the controversy with Great Britain over the taking of fur seals in the waters of the Bering Sea. Under his direction a special patrol was formed to apprehend vessels the United States regarded as poachers. In addition, he put together certain of the arguments on which his country rested its claim to exclusive rights over the seals. After he had retired as Secretary—and while the fur seal controversy was in the process of arbitration—he wrote a masterly article for the *North American Review* explaining the American position

[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Volwiler, "Harrison, Blaine and American Foreign Policy," 639.
[66] Mitchell, *History of the Modern American Navy*, 45.
[67] West, *Admirals of American Empire*, 171.

to the public.[68] In other cases too he shaped the interpretations of international law which the Administration adopted; for example in the Barrundia Case touching upon the right of asylum for political refugees; and during the Chilean Revolution concerning the rights of neutrals.[69]

Illustrious as Tracy's service as Secretary of the Navy was, it did not bring him personal happiness. To begin with he left behind a flourishing law practice with an income four times his salary as Secretary. Then in February 1890 tragedy struck when his house in Washington burned down while he was away, and his wife and youngest daughter burned to death in it. About a year later (January 1891) his closest friend in the cabinet, William Windom, Secretary of the Treasury, fell dead while speaking at a banquet. Some newspapers suggested that Tracy would succeed his friend in the Treasury, but this did not occur.[70] If he had expected the other post, his failure to get it did not cause him to waver in his loyalty to his chief. On the contrary, he campaigned vigorously for Harrison in 1892, and even defied New York Boss Tom Platt when the latter tried to secure a Brooklyn delegation which would oppose the renomination of the President.[71] Moreover, after Harrison's defeat it was at least considered that the President might join Tracy's law firm, but in the end he returned to Indiana instead. On the other hand, the Assistant Secretary, James Soley, did join his chief's firm and remained with it.

Upon the defeat of the Republicans and the advent of Grover Cleveland's second term, Benjamin F. Tracy returned to New York. Although he thus departed from the national scene, he left a permanent impress on it, for he had proved himself among the ablest of all Secretaries of the Navy.

[68] B. F. Tracy, "The Behring Sea Question," *North American Review* (New York), CLVI, May 1893, 513–42.

[69] Concerning the Barrundia Case see John Bassett Moore, *A Digest of International Law* (8 vols.; Washington, D.C.: 1906), II, 851, 852; concerning Chilean trouble see *ibid.*, 1107, 1108.

[70] For example see *Baltimore American*, February 5, 1891.

[71] Tracy to William Smythe, June 15, 1892, Tracy Papers.

ROBERT WILLIAM GLENROIE VAIL, LITT.D., L.H.D

Director of The New-York Historical Society, Sept. 1, 1944–March 31, 1960

HONOR AND FAREWELL TO DR. VAIL

ON MARCH 30, 1960, The New-York Historical Society bestowed its GOLD MEDAL FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORY *upon Dr. R. W. G. Vail, its distinguished Director. For fifteen years and seven months Dr. Vail had guided the Society in increased service to scholarship and to the public. During that time his personal achievements in the field of American history and bibliography, added to those of his former years, won widespread recognition in the form of academic honors and associations, office in other learned societies, critical acclaim of his published writings, and the esteem of his colleagues. The Society, through its Board of Trustees, decided that this recognition should be crowned before his imminent retirement by joining Dr. Vail with the select company of former recipients of its Gold Medal. A few members of the staff joined the Officers and Trustees in the Board Room to witness the ceremony and bid our Director a fond farewell.*

In presenting the medal President Kimball spoke as follows:

Gold medals "For Achievement in History" were first authorized by the Trustees of The New-York Historical Society in 1925. During the ensuing thirty-five years there have been six recipients: I. N. Phelps Stokes, 1925; Wilberforce Eames, 1931; DeWitt M. Lockman, N.A., 1933; George C. D. Odell, 1942; Harry T. Peters, 1947; and Allan Nevins, 1954.

This award has taken a high place among coveted American history honors which are bestowed in recognition of outstanding achievement.

The medal itself is three inches in diameter cast in 18-carat gold from the sculptured design of Sherry E. Fry.

It now gives the Trustees of The New-York Historical Society great pleasure to bestow this honor on our retiring Director. He has distinguished himself over a long period of years, here and elsewhere, as an ardent researcher and a recognized author of the truth in the field of American history.

Director Robert William Glenroie Vail, Litt.D., L.H.D., is

best known to most of us here in the Society as the author of *Knickerbocker Birthday: A Sesqui-Centennial History of The New-York Historical Society, 1804–1954*. Of this Dr. Vail has expressed himself as "particularly proud for the fact that it could be written and published within ten months' time without interfering with the routine of the Society."

Of the *History* Professor Allan Nevins has said: "It is a fascinating, an impressive, and in some respects a romantic story that Dr. Vail has told, and he has related it not only with erudition, but with narrative art and with graphic skill in depicting a long line of notable New Yorkers. The romance lies in the development of The New-York Historical Society from poverty and uncertainty into an institution of international renown, holding a wealth of historic and artistic treasures, and exercising an influence as wide as the world of learning. . . . This is a book which should interest all thoughtful Americans."

Another special star in his crown is the University of Pennsylvania Press's *The Voice of the Old Frontier* which has gone into a second edition. Added to these of course are many historical monographs.

Dr. Vail's constant researches began as an assistant in the New York Public Library, an alma mater he was to return to several times in the years which followed after 1914. There was the librarianship of the Minnesota Historical Society, his first venture into the "cold world"; seven years as librarian of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association in New York City; nine years as librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., where he worked simultaneously as Editor of *Sabin's Dictionary of Books on American History*, a seven-year accomplishment for Dr. Vail.

Then followed four years, 1940–44, as librarian of the New York State Library at Albany, from which position our President, George A. Zabriskie, brought him down the Hudson River for these fifteen years of interesting association.

Dr. Vail, in presenting you with this gold medal my wish is that it will reflect the sunny hours, months, and years you have directed the affairs of The New-York Historical Society.

In accepting the medal Dr. Vail replied as follows:

Mr. President:

It is with deep gratitude that I accept from the Officers and Trustees of our Society its Gold Medal for Achievement in History. No honor could have surprised or pleased me more but I receive it in trust for all of the other little-known historians and bibliographers who, generally without recognition, prepare the tools which make easier the work of the more distinguished craftsmen.

As I look at this medal in days to come it will indeed reflect the sunny years I have spent here collecting and interpreting historical and artistic treasures for the use of other students of our nation's history. I shall remember our exciting adventures in securing, studying and exhibiting the Belknap, Livingston, Prentis and Stuyvesant collections and the hundreds of other important individual items which came in the last fifteen years to help make our library and museum outstanding in the field of American history.

I am particularly happy that this medal is handed to me by my oldest friend on the Board of Trustees and, as I look about me, I recall what the greatest of all American bibliographers, Dr. Wilberforce Eames, said here at the Society on a similar occasion in 1931:

"It is a great privilege to have so many friends."

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

To Try Men's Souls: Loyalty Tests in American History. By HAROLD M. HYMAN. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959. ix + 414 pages, biblio., index. $6.00.)

Reviewed by WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, *Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States.*

This is a painstaking historical survey of loyalty oaths from 1600 A.D. down to date as practiced first in England and later in this country. It is a dismal account and for the most part well done; yet few will put the book down without a feeling of the futility, the cruelty, the injustices done by the centuries-long "loyalty" probes. Oath-taking perhaps creates in some the sense of solidarity. It is conceived as a neat way of making "the enemy" disclose himself to the community. Benjamin Franklin, who saw some of the extreme practices in our Revolutionary period, labeled loyalty oaths "as the last recourse of liars." Traitors almost invariably got in line to take the oaths along with the rest of the crowd. These oaths bothered men of conscience who thought their beliefs were beyond the probing of government and who felt they were responsible only for their acts or conduct—not for what they thought. But people bent on mischief found loyalty oaths to be ready havens from popular suspicion. Yet in spite of their proven unreliability it seems that almost every generation in the Anglo-American world since 1600 used the loyalty oath as a protective device in times of trouble or turbulence.

The book relates the break which Henry VIII made with Rome and the oath he exacted from his subjects. Those who would not swear confessed guilt and risked the King's bills of attainder, the confiscation of their property, exile, and even death. Elizabeth I somewhat relented. But James I renewed the intensity of oath-taking and bore down on Catholics and Calvinists.

This is the start of the book. And from there the scene shifts to these shores. Those who came here brought loyalty oaths with them and adapted them to new ends. For a century or so loyalty-testing in the colonies concerned itself with ferreting out the religious heretics. When revolution was in the making loyalty oaths served new purposes. Now they were employed to separate the Tories from the Whigs. In New Jersey they were exacted of all civilians and those who refused were exiled to New York.

This was the last attempt to cover an entire State with loyalty-testing. Oaths were of course required of people holding civil posts and of army officers. Local Whig organizations continued their loyalty-testing. John Jay and John Adams were champions of it. Washington used it quietly and tactfully among the troops. One of the most interesting chapters

deals with New York's experiment with loyalty-testing. And when Howe took New York City in 1776 the people who had recently taken rebel loyalty oaths were now subjected to British loyalty-testing.

When victory was won, loyalty-testing continued to harass returning Tories and to bring dissidents into line.

A little-known chapter of South Carolina history—1832 to 1833—is well told. This was a time when Calhoun split with Jackson and nullifiers were aligned against the nation. Loyalty-testing became armory in the nullifier's arsenal.

Five chapters describe in detail the various loyalty oaths and loyalty-testing devices used during the Civil War. Both North and South used them. Men who refused test-oaths even on religious grounds were barred from civil and military positions and became political prisoners. The fate of the non-conformists was bitter. Loyalty-testing often became an occasion for looting. Loyalty commissioners roamed the country. Their fervor was cooled only by the Man in the White House. Lincoln, who created the loyalty-testing scheme, also knew mercy; it was his compassion that made it sufferable; and if his ideas had been carried into effect after victory came, wounds would not have been needlessly reopened. The aftermath of the Civil War—the attempt to exact oaths covering past conduct and past beliefs—is related in detail and with interest.

World War I, the emergence of voluntary "spy catchers," the birth of the FBI and its "red raids" occupy two chapters.

The last is a rather superficial discussion of the "witch hunt" that has plagued us since World War II. There are amazing inaccuracies here. *Pennsylvania* v. *Nelson*, 350 U.S. 497, is not accurately portrayed. Congress could, if it wished, put enforcement of *national* sedition laws in the hands of State officials. Yet the FBI would certainly be the first to object. *Jencks* v. *United States*, 353 U.S. 657, is described as a decision that requires "that the FBI open its files to persons prosecuted on the basis of evidence contained in those files." That is the essence of the propaganda levelled at the *Jencks* case. But it is far from the truth. And it is amazing that this distinguished scholar should so describe the case. It is also amazing that numerous court decisions limiting the powers of loyalty boards are not even mentioned in the text.

This is a scholarly book up to the last chapter. From there to the end it degenerates to a vapid account of current practices that have disgraced us. The theme of the book throughout is solid and convincing. But I put it down with the feeling that a great opportunity had been missed. The case against Henry VIII, James I, Cotton Mather, *et al* is interesting. But what our government, the FBI, and the innumerable "loyalty" boards have done to Americans in recent years is nowhere evident. Perhaps it takes 100 to 300 years for some professors to become "objective." After all, the FBI is still around the corner.

The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia. By Wilcomb E. Washburn. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, 1957. xv + 248 pages, frontis., maps, biblio. notes, index. $5.00.)

Reviewed by Lawrence H. Leder, *Assistant Professor of History, Brandeis University.*

To students of New York's history, Bacon's Rebellion has a familiar ring. The legends and conflicting interpretations surrounding it seem remarkably like those which encompass New York's own critical eruption—the Leisler Rebellion. Both movements have been periodically viewed as preludes to the American Revolution, and the leading figures of each movement have been criticized, not for what they did, but for acting too soon.

Dr. Washburn has thoroughly examined the events of Bacon's Rebellion and its aftermath, finally laying to rest the myth of Nathaniel Bacon as the "Torchbearer of the Revolution." Indeed, his summation of the historiography of the movement and his explanation of the myth's origin is masterly. However, in cutting Bacon down to a "giddy-headed Youth," or at most a "clever rogue," he has elevated Governor Sir William Berkeley to perhaps undeserved heights. There is little question that the Governor's conduct during the Rebellion was most meritorious, but there have been grave doubts as to the wisdom of his actions after the movement's collapse. Dr. Washburn tends to dismiss or minimize any criticism of Berkeley in order to create a new hero in Bacon's place.

The presentation of the dispute between the Governor and the royal commissioners sent to Virginia after the Rebellion raises several questions. Charles II ordered a pardon of the rebels after the cessation of hostilities and the commissioners insisted upon honoring it; Berkeley chose instead to omit from its provisions several of the leading rebels, thereby placing himself and his judgment above his King. The Governor also condoned the practice after the colony was pacified of seizing the estates of alleged rebels without first bringing them to trial. In support, he cited precedents during the English Civil War, but these did not convince the royal commissioners, the King, nor this reviewer, although they did Dr. Washburn. As a matter of fact, the precedents cited by Berkeley tend to beg the question: they occurred during a war, while he acted after the King's peace was restored to Virginia. Further, Dr. Washburn confuses the seizure of supposed rebel property without trial and conviction with the right of aggrieved loyalists to sue the rebels for damages under civil procedures; the claim that Charles II's authorization of the latter form of relief is an approval of Berkeley's use of the former cannot be substantiated. It is difficult to understand how the Governor's

tactics prove that he constantly emphasized the concept that the "lawes are above him."

Equally important is the question raised by Dr. Washburn as to the later conduct of politics in Virginia. He suggests that "resistance to autocratic government was born . . . in the post-rebellion fight of the loyalists against an arbitrary injustice of the King's commissioners and governors." The injustice referred to is the prevention of further ravages against the estates of supposed rebels. The loyalists' defense of colonial rights as opposed to Crown prerogatives stemmed not so much from the King's "injustice" as from his attempt to enforce justice by preventing a group of his subjects from repaying one wrong by still another.

There is a significance to this study which transcends Virginia's borders, however, because of the parallel between Bacon's Rebellion and Leisler's Rebellion. Both were sparked by relatively minor causes—unfounded fears of Indians in Virginia and of Catholics in New York—and both released underlying popular discontents. Moreover, in the southern colony, the results of the Crown's policy of leniency was the development of political stability and homogeneity; in the northern colony, the results of the Crown's policy of repression of the rebels led to two decades of viciousness.

Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764–1766. Edited by Edmund S. Morgan. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, 1959. xi + 163 pages, frontis. $2.00.)

Reviewed by Philip L. White, *Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Chicago.*

Professor Morgan compiled this selection of source materials to introduce the undergraduate student to the "welter of complexities and contradictions" which underlie the generalizations found in textbooks. To do so he has presented "most of the information that has ever been available to historians and more than historians have generally made use of" on the Stamp Act Crisis. That any but the most advanced undergraduates could profitably fight their way through this repetitious tangle of constitutional disputation may be doubted, but it is evident that their mentors who teach courses dealing with the Revolution could do so to great advantage.

The editorial work is relatively unobtrusive. Introductory comments are minimal and largely non-controversial. For the most part they emphasize the uncertainty of our knowledge of the facts (what did Patrick Henry really say about George III?) or the complexity of the conflict-

ing constitutional and moral arguments. The strong patriotic bias which reviewers have noted in Morgan's earlier works (*The Stamp Act Crisis; The Birth of the Republic*) is still present although less explicit. The term "Americans," perhaps for want of a better one, is still so used as to imply that the portion of the colonial population which supported British authority was undeserving of that designation. The penetrating questions which precede each of the five largely chronological sections into which the materials have been divided seem also to reflect the editor's high sympathy for the "American" cause.

By means of these questions Professor Morgan attempts to make a point which he has stressed before (*Stamp Act Crisis*, 272–77). Contrary to the usual textbook assertion, the "Americans" had given the British no reason to suppose that "external" taxation was any less objectionable than "internal" taxation. All of the sources here reproduced make plain the "American" determination to resist all taxation designed to raise revenue. Even Franklin's testimony to Parliament, widely cited as objecting to internal but not to external taxation, is seen in the context of Parliamentary discussion to mean perhaps only that "Americans" accepted British regulation of American commerce, including imposition of duties necessary to defray an equitable portion of Britain's expenditures in protecting that commerce, but not any form of taxation designed to raise revenue for which there was no obvious *quid pro quo*.

The conclusion is weakened, however, by other passages in these pages to which the editor's questions do not always point. It is evident that the Sugar Act of 1764 was a great embarrassment to the "Americans" in their constitutional disputations. Its purpose was explicitly stated in the law itself to be the raising of revenue. Consequently objections to it should have been as violent as those directed against the later Stamp Act if Professor Morgan's point were fully valid. There were complaints about it of course, especially about those enforcement features which facilitated victimization of American businessmen by corrupt customs officers. But the act was successfully enforced. Subsequent objectors to Parliamentary taxation for revenue had to deal with this unpleasant fact. What Dulany did was to ignore the stated purpose of the act and pretend that it was just another regulation of commerce from which there arose incidental revenue. Franklin more specifically stated that British protection of the sea lanes gave Parliament an "equitable right to some toll or duty on merchandises" imported into America. Implicitly Morgan suggests here what he stated explicitly in *The Stamp Act Crisis* (p. 276), namely that Franklin was not representing accurately the "American" position. Clearly most "Americans" were insisting that no Parliamentary taxation for revenue could be tolerated, but just as clearly the Sugar Act was being tolerated. Thus, while Franklin in appearing to suggest that external taxation was acceptable was probably trying to ease the path toward

repeal of the Stamp Act, it seems likely as well that he was trying to follow Dulany in arguing a position which would take account of the acceptance of the Sugar Act, but bar any additional revenue taxes. Most "Americans" preferred to ignore the Sugar Act and assert simply that all forms of revenue taxation by Parliament were intolerable. Morgan follows their example.

Obviously there is in this volume much material for provocative and enlightening discussion. For the few instructors who have small groups of advanced students in specialized courses dealing with the Revolutionary period, this work could be a real godsend. For others the two-year scope will be a serious limitation, but careful consideration will bring much new insight to any perceptive reader who is not already an expert in the field.

Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman, Condensed from the Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Translated and Edited by Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959. vi + 250 pages, index. $3.50.)

Reviewed by Edgar F. Romig, D.D., *Senior Minister, Collegiate Church of New York.*

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, a native of Hanover, educated at Göttingen and Halle, was a clergyman who, in 1742, at the age of thirty-one, was sent to America by the Lutheran authorities in Halle to be a pastor of several congregations in the Philadelphia region of Pennsylvania. For forty-five years he labored as a kind of missionary among the colonists—German, Swedish and Dutch—of Lutheran persuasion. In the course of his travels, which took him to many communities along the Atlantic seaboard from Georgia to the Canadian border, he came to be known by people of all faiths, including the Roman Catholic, and in all walks of life. He knew and could write informingly about such men as Chief Justice William Allen, Jacob Duché, Anglican parson, who was chaplain of the first Congress and later became a Tory, Benjamin Franklin, William Smith, first provost of the University of Pennsylvania, Michael Schlatter, patriarch of the Reformed churches, George Whitefield, itinerating English evangelist, and Count Nicholas Zinzendorf, patron of the Moravians. Muhlenberg was a man of unusual gifts, including not only theological training and grounding in classical learning, but skill in the use of medicines, business and political acumen, and genuine talent as an observer and writer. To quote the preface of this volume, "He had a sharp eye for human-interest detail. During the winter the Continental Army camped at Valley Forge he had a front-row seat at the skirmishes fought in the Philadelphia area, and described the situation of civilians between the lines."

As its title suggests, the *Notebook* is a condensation from *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* (Muhlenberg Press, 1942–58), now out of print. The larger work, in three volumes, containing 4,502 columns of text, has now been reduced to one-twentieth of its contents. What remains is of incalculable value to all who are interested in 18th-century America. Entrancingly readable, it brings to one not only a report manifestly required by the ecclesiastical authorities overseas, but the well-fashioned writing of one who savored life to the full in a diversified world and delighted in narrative portrayal.

Were this to be a lengthy review, detailed mention would be made of Muhlenberg's observations in the Western World. For example, on an early page, he touched, with the sensitiveness of one deploring slavery, on the condition of the blacks in the Carolinas. "The heathen slaves are so numerous," he wrote, "that it is estimated that there are fifteen for every white man. They occasionally rebel against their masters in the country." Proceeding, we read his comment on the establishing of what is now Princeton University: "Dec. 16, 1765—Some of the people here ought to be educated by us. . . . The English Presbyterians have done this, and still do it, and they have made unbelievable progress throughout North America. One old preacher, named William Tennent, who lived in a log hut in the country, started with his own sons, and a large institution, the *seminarium* in Jersey, has grown out of it. Between one and two hundred men trained in this way are laboring in various parts. . . . They know how to adapt themselves to circumstances here." Again, we note his references to New York, the following selected from many: "Aug. 9, 1776—Received letters and newspapers from Frederick Muhlenberg, who had come back to Philadelphia from New York the day before, after narrowly escaping from New York and leaving some of his household furnishings behind. Today he sent up a wagonload of his household furniture and books and sent word that he would come up [from Philadelphia to Trappe] with his wife, three children and maid next week." On an invention, he gives us, under date of July 26, 1784, this entry: "Our American philosophers are now very much occupied perfecting balloons or flying machines to make it possible to sail in and above the atmosphere. They have already made several trial voyages. It will probably cost more than it is worth because there are no means of subsistence or treasures to be had beyond the atmosphere, nor is there any air there that is fit for human lungs. These Daedali will thus be making waxen wings for themselves and their sons, and like Phaeton will want to rule the sun. It were safest to explore and seek first the way to the heaven of heavens, cultivate the earth for bread, improve navigation on water, and let every creature live and move and have its being in the place and element to which and for which the all-wise, all-gracious, and almighty Creator has ordained

it: the birds in the air, the fish in the water, cattle and men upon the earth, etc."

The full stature of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg is perhaps best appreciated in this *Notebook* by his occasional and by no means overdramatized mention of his gifted sons. Persons who have a blindspot in them in respect to non-English patronymics among those who have made our land what it is, and particularly those who still labor under the fiction that the Pennsylvania Germans are the descendants of Hessian mercenaries, should be required to read in any good encyclopedia the article on the three Muhlenbergs of the second generation in the United States. All were born in the family home in Trappe, Pennsylvania, all were educated at the University of Halle, and all played conspicuous parts in the making of our nation. The eldest, John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, relinquished his pulpit as an Episcopal clergyman in Virginia, to raise and lead a valiant regiment in the American Revolution. He became a major general. Later he served three terms in the House of Representatives. Frederick August Conrad Muhlenberg, the second son, already mentioned, became a pastor in New York, but because of Revolutionary sympathies left for Pennsylvania in 1776, where he immediately played a patriot's role. He served twice as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Gotthilf Henry Ernest Muhlenberg, third of the sons, also trained as a clergyman, became a distinguished botanist, member of the American Philosophical Society, and the first principal of the educational institution in Lancaster, sponsored by Benjamin Franklin, which is now known as Franklin and Marshall College.

The reading of the *Notebook*, which for this reviewer was hard to lay aside, will doubtless prompt persons whose interest has been whetted to turn to the more comprehensive *Journals*. In them this reviewer would particularly recommend Muhlenberg's account of the dedication of a Lutheran church in New York on May 1, 1767. It had its religious side— the edifice unlocked to the words, "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation . . . may enter in," the thronging into it not only of the godly but of "publicans and sinners," and the singing of evangelical hymns by all to the accompaniment of music provided by "a band of German hautboy players who had recently arrived as recruits"; and its social side at the dinner following worship— with the best citizenry attending, the choicest viands provided, and a festive mood, which nevertheless provoked this comment: "After the meal toasts were drunk in solemn and orthodox fashion to the health of His Majesty, the whole royal family, all the estates, and even Dr. Luther. But it almost appeared that there were Jacobites in the company, for even when the toasts were being drunk, some drank nearly all the healths with a single glassful!" He would point also to numerous entries marked by a drollery which, one gathers,

had to be kept in check lest the missionary in America be suspected of levity by the committee in Halle.

But the *Notebook* itself, thanks to its capable translators and editors, is an abundant storehouse. And those of us who cherish the spiritual heritage of our land will value it for its underlying faith in appraisal of men and events. To illustrate this we may wisely conclude with this entry, written not far from the scenes of battle, on May 7, 1778, concerning the Father of his country: ". . . His Excellency General Washington rode around among his army yesterday and admonished each and everyone to fear God, to put away the wickedness that has set in and become so general, and to practice the Christian virtues. From all appearances this gentleman does not belong to the so-called world of society, for he respects God's Word . . . and bears himself in humility and gentleness. Therefore the Lord God has also singularly, yea, marvelously, preserved him from harm in the midst of countless perils, ambuscades, fatigues, etc., and has hitherto graciously held him in his hand as a chosen vessel."

John Paul Jones: A Sailor's Biography. By Samuel Eliot Morison. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1959. xxii + 453 pages, illus., charts, diagrams, biblio., index. $6.50.)

Reviewed by T. H. Giddings, *Associate Professor of English and History, United States Merchant Marine Academy.*

The name of Samuel Eliot Morison has been synonymous with scholarship and seamanship since the publication of his *Maritime History of Massachusetts* almost forty years ago. In the early forties he won wide acclaim with his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Columbus, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea;* and with his authoritative *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* he securely established his reputation as our outstanding naval historian. To this tremendous achievement he has now added what appears to be the definitive word of John Paul Jones—a highly readable, exiciting, scholarly "sailor's biography."

The sailor of the title is Morison himself, and it is precisely this fact that explains the greatness of the book. Admiral Morison has always believed that he must live and feel the history that he writes. For his biography of Columbus, he made voyages to the West Indies, and across the Atlantic in sailing vessels, checking Columbus's routes and methods. For his work on the Navy in World War II, he became a commissioned naval officer and took part in many engagements; and while preparing the Jones biography, he sailed around Flamborough Head, the scene of John Paul's famous victory over the *Serapis*.

The whole story of Jones is faithfully told in this stimulating book.

Though his exploits on the sea will have the greatest interest for most readers, one who is looking for a measure of the whole man will find it here. One sees how Jones jockeyed for position on the seniority list as well as on the high seas. He reads the record of the numerous "affairs of the heart" of the Jones who adapted a poem composed for a French lady so that it would do just as well for an American. Here is Jones sorely beset by the erratic behavior of Captain Pierre Landais of the *Alliance*, who, at the height of the *Serapis* action, fired broadsides into his own ally; and by the machinations of Arthur Lee, one of the American Commissioners in Paris, who hated both Jones and Franklin. Out of this wealth of detail emerges a sharply etched portrait of the man, with all his greatness and all his blemishes.

Only a seafaring man could have handled with such zest and precision the account of the Jones of the quarter-deck. Though the language is laced through with salt spray, Morison never obscures the picture with confusing technicalities. The heart of the story lies in those chapters—comprising fully three-quarters of the book—devoted to Jones's service in the Continental Navy. The few chapters on the birth and youth of the Arbigland boy, and his years in the West Indies trade, serve as a prologue; those on Kontradmiral Pavel Ivanovich Jones of the Czarina's Navy, and his latter days in France, as an epilogue.

The climax comes with the action between the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Serapis*. Never has Jones's consummate skill been more lucidly explained than in Morison's masterly account. Here, as in several other instances, charts and diagrams are provided for the safe guidance of landsman and mariner alike.

Admiral Morison has surely lived and felt the life of John Paul Jones, and he has gone as far as a biographer can to let the reader live and feel it too.

The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams. Edited by Lester J. Cappon. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1959. li + viii + 638 pages, illus., index. 2 vols., $12.50.)

The Papers of Benjamin Franklin: Volume I, January 6, 1706 through December 31, 1734. Edited by Leonard W. Labaree and Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959. lxxxviii + 400 pages, genealogy, chronology, charts, illus., index. $7.50.)

Reviewed by Lawrence H. Leder, *Assistant Professor of History, Brandeis University.*

The appearance within several months of each other of two such important works is indeed noteworthy, especially because of the emphasis

they give to three giants of American life. The United States has been most fortunate in the quality of its leadership during times of stress, and the Revolutionary generation was exceptionally blessed with Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin. One need not argue the Carlylean concept of "Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History" to agree that much of what happened in those years resulted from the ideas and activities of such men. Thus these works testify both to the greatness of the men with whom they deal and the generation in which they lived. Yet, though they achieve a similar result, each proceeds to its goal over a different path.

The Adams-Jefferson Letters brings together a correspondence of which much has already appeared in print and of which all will undoubtedly appear in the compendious collections of Adams and Jefferson papers now in the process of publication. Why, then, should these letters be extracted from the corpus of the correspondence? The answer lies in the unique and rewarding result of Dr. Cappon's selectivity. Buried in the midst of other papers, robbed of their pertinence one to the other, these letters would lose their full natural vitality, robustness, and humility. Two outstanding figures of their age, closely associated in the greatest developments of their time, corresponded on all manner of things for nearly half a century (excepting twelve years of strained silence). The interaction of two such minds was bound to produce a fascinating correspondence. Although both men were aware of the probable value of what they wrote, they jealously guarded their privacy. The possibility of the eventual publication of at least a portion of their correspondence occurred to both of them, but they preferred to let posterity judge their respective merits and importance.

Perhaps the one participant in this exchange who had no such thoughts was Abigail Adams. Not only was she the wife of the second President, but she was also a wise New England matron whose taste and versatility marked her as an exceptional individual. Dr. Cappon has wisely included her contributions to the correspondence in this collection for she served to strengthen the bond between the reserved Virginian and the warm but irascible New Englander. Indeed, when political difficulties at the time of the revolution of 1800 breached the relationship between the two men, it was Abigail who first attempted, although unsuccessfully, to repair the break in 1804 at the death of Jefferson's daughter Polly.

These volumes offer their greatest contribution in the opportunity they give to assess both Adams and Jefferson, not as politicians or political symbols, but as intelligent human beings. The first period of their correspondence, from 1777 to 1800, was devoted to the problems which each faced in the events of the day—the Revolution, diplomacy, and domestic politics. After the resumption of friendly relations in 1812, their pens evaluated the events in which they had played major roles, especially those of the Revolution, and the general concepts and ideas that

interested both of them. The result is "a rich and voluminous correspondence that has no counterpart in any period of American intellectual history."

Purposely designed to appeal to the general reader, the *Adams-Jefferson Letters* should also attract the specialists' attention. Although scholarly apparatus has been kept to a minimum, there is strong internal evidence that Dr. Cappon has fully utilized scholarship in the broadest sense. Instead of extensive documentation, annotation, and headnotes, the letters are kept in chronological order and broken into logical thematic chapters, each of which is prefaced by a brief and unobtrusive introduction setting the historical background. As a result, the letters stand forth and testify to the mental vigor of Adams and Jefferson from their entrance on the national scene until their deaths on July 4, 1826.

The masterly use of selectivity has been demonstrated by Dr. Cappon, but Messrs. Labaree and Bell have chosen an entirely different approach to their subject. By encompassing everything which can be truly ascribed to Benjamin Franklin, they have set themselves the formidable task of presenting that remarkable individual's full and diverse personality. An analysis of the first of many projected volumes suggests that their goal will be met.

To anyone who might ever attempt a similar venture, whether on this or a lesser scale, the introduction to the first volume of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* is heartily recommended. It relates the intricacies of tracking down items in public and private hands, ranging as far afield as Windsor Castle and the Karl Marx University at Leipzig. "We began as scholars," the editors remark, "but have become sleuths and venturesome serendipitists as well." The full methodology used in evaluating their finds is given, as well as that used in assessing the relative value of different versions of the same item, and in preparing the materials for publication. The scope of what has been and will in the future be included is suggested by this statement: "the ultimate test to be applied in determining whether to print any document or part of a Franklin document is whether the contents are in any sense the product of his mind."

In line with this dictum, the editors have taken a period considered barren by previous compilers of Franklin's works, the twenty-eight years following his birth in 1706, and provided a fascinating collection of his writings. Few personal letters survive the period of his youth, apprenticeship to his printer brother in Boston, brief sojourn in England, removal to Philadelphia, and involvement in that community's affairs. But a significant insight into his development is provided by the series of essays which he wrote for the press—the Silence Dogood letters, Busy-Body letters, *Pennsylvania Gazette* essays, and *Poor Richard's Almanack* (a photographic reproduction of the first edition of 1733 is included). The Silence Dogood letters, for example, provide an excellent parody by a

sixteen-year-old on the frailties and vices of Boston Puritanism in the early 1720s.

For each item in this mass of material, the editors have provided expert documentation of its source and an historical commentary to place it in its context. Not only have they given their reasons for the attribution of each item to Franklin and the acceptance of one text in place of another, but they have examined each item previously attributed to him which, upon closer investigation, has not been adequately proven to be his and cited the document, its location, and their justification for its exclusion. To complete the resources available to the reader, they have added a genealogy of the Franklin and Folger families to facilitate the tracing of Franklin's ancestors and descendants and a chronology of his activities during the years covered by this volume.

This first number of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* masterfully displays the scope and power of scholarship while avoiding the pitfall of pedantry. It presents a crisp image of Franklin's versatility and accomplishments, and is a noteworthy contribution to our historical literature, following as it does in the path of Dr. Julian Boyd's *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Such works as those under review here are adequate proof that the historical profession has come a long way since the days of Parson Weems and even Jared Sparks.

The Nation Takes Shape, 1789–1837. By Marcus Cunliffe. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959. vii + 223 pages, biblio., index. $3.50.)

Reviewed by David L. Sterling, *Department of History, The Ohio State University*.

In a provocative but not completely successful book, Marcus Cunliffe searches for and summarizes the continuities that characterize American history during the first half-century of its national development. He censures American scholars for their almost myopic attempt to present the formative period in terms of "Federalism" and "Good Feelings," of "Jeffersonian" and "Jacksonian Democracy." He believes that these chronological terms are misleading and artificial, that they disregard consensus, and emphasize conflict and controversy, that they suggest unnecessarily a deep political fissure among the American people.

In his own study Professor Cunliffe strives to avoid the traps attributed to his predecessors. He proceeds topically rather than chronologically. He relies on the most respectable historical scholarship. He is judicious, perhaps even to the point of timidity. Along with Cunliffe, we watch Hamilton establish the national credit, and Washington set the precedents of an independent executive. We see the United States, because of European conflict, drift towards war, and emerge demanding no re-

occurrence. We go westward with the impatient pioneer, southward by steamboat into the cotton-producing Gulf Plains, northward for a visit to the industrial towns of New England. We discuss the symptoms of nationalism and the realities of sectionalism. We argue over the elusive qualities of democracy and conservatism, and finally we pause to define the American character.

But what are the results? After reading Cunliffe's book, what new insights do we have into the formative period? Professor Cunliffe does not synthesize; he blends and amalgamates. He seems to temporize over his own conclusions. He resembles in fact his own portrait of the American politician who has no real principles, who is both democrat and conservative, and who, therefore, "ignores problems" (in this case by circumlocution), "in the hope they would eventually go away." It is not enough to cite both the demand for a national culture, and the fact that American artists find so little support among their own people. It is not enough to discuss Jackson's crusade against the Second United States Bank, agree with the modifications of the traditional picture, and state finally that these modifications do not "provide the whole truth." Professor Cunliffe's attempts at analysis are admirable; the end-product is disappointing.

I have one further criticism of *The Nation Takes Shape*. One might agree that atomizing American history according to presidential terms is inadequate and artificial, but is the treatment of the half-century between 1789 and 1837 less arbitrary? Does not the War of 1812 mark an end and a beginning? If we aim at correct periodization, it seems to me that we must either conclude in 1815 or continue to the Civil War, for such forces as the acceleration of westward expansion and the growth of sectionalism are manifestations of a new departure.

George Catlin and the Old Frontier. By Harold McCracken. (New York: The Dial Press, 1959. 216 pages, illus., biblio., index. $18.50.)

George Catlin: Episodes from "Life Among the Indians" and "Last Rambles." Edited by Marvin C. Ross. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959. xxxv + 357 pages, illus., biblio., index. $12.50.)

Reviewed by Loyd Haberly, *Dean of Arts and Sciences at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and author of* Pursuit of the Horizon, *a biography of George Catlin.*

By the slow sureness of justice, George Catlin has risen again to rank as one of "the most extraordinary men of the nineteenth century." So manifold and diverse were his doings that two noble books about him can come out simultaneously, without duplication of substance.

Both these books are built of right combinations of Catlin pictures and Catlin phrases, creating for us some semblance of the exciting effect that

George Catlin's studied eloquence once had upon the tens of thousands who listened to him in halls hung to the ceiling all around with his painted scenes of the outdoor and the primitive.

Publishers and compilers alike are to be commended for doing so well what there was so much need for doing. In an age of specialists, these books are wholesome reminders that the many-sidedness of such men as Catlin has been America's resilient strength.

Tragedy—overpowering and sustained as anything in Euripides—cut Catlin's life-story into two strangely different segments which are the biographical concern of these two independent books. Until that tragedy began to grind him, there was hope and happiness and a dash of the debonair in Catlin's brush and pen. Afterwards, there was too clear a showing of the grotesque, the futile, and the doomed. Forgetting the clean bright prairies, he found a jungle world in himself to match that through which he trudged and paddled with his gigantic loyal Caesar, the escaped slave.

George Catlin and the Old Frontier, by Harold McCracken, is a richly illustrated account of Catlin's pre-tragic period. Compiled by a Westerner who is a prolific writer as well as a museum director, it competently puts into place the jigsaw components which Catlin himself jumbled so confusingly in "Letters" and in various books and catalogues.

In this rapid narrative, young Catlin grows to frontier manhood, studies law and art, and dedicates himself to the painting and recording of Indian life. Incredible wanderings take him up and down the great heartland rivers and over horseback trails of the Southwest tribes. He shows his vast collection of Indian pictures in this country and abroad. He is a hero and a lionized author. He fails financially, and in reputation. His loyal wife and his adored only son die. Relatives take away his daughters. A creditor takes away his pictures—to let them mold and rot in a Philadelphia boiler factory.

Generally, Mr. McCracken has successfully combined his own writing style with the exuberantly overflowing—and yet sometimes startlingly naked and sincere—Catlin quotations. To what previous biographers knew, he has added something about Catlin's re-burial, and about Catlin's dealings with Sir Thomas Phillipps, and has summarized a remarkable listing of 15th- and 16th-century artists made in 1821 by Catlin's farmer-philosopher father. Apparently the research for the book ended before the Gilcrease Library in Tulsa acquired a revealing Catlin sketchbook which shows the young artist's apprentice-work. Wisely, Mr. McCracken has not made too much of Catlin inconsistencies in dating, or of such minor eye-witness denials as the Fort Pierre diary which takes away one of the two voyageurs that Catlin's account names as his down-river companions.

The many pictures in this book are well-chosen and superbly reproduced. Some of the 36 in full color recapture a freshness that time and

smoke hazed over in the originals long ago. The index and notes are adequate, save for a very few failures to coincide with the handsomely-printed text.

Marvin C. Ross of the Los Angeles County Museum has reconstructed the shadowed second segment of Catlin's story in *George Catlin*, compiled—as the subtitle indicates—by putting together selected chapters from *Life Among the Indians* and *Last Rambles*, the two books for young readers which once ranked Catlin with Homer and Defoe as a stirring voice of adventure.

Exact care and unobtrusive editorial skill make this work a memorable and orderly mapping of the tangled tracks of an aging and pauperized Catlin painting his way along the Amazon and Orinoco, over the Andes, to Siberia and back along the Pacific coast, then inland up the Columbia and Snake Rivers to Flathead country.

Mr. Ross—author of *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller*—well knows the values and purposes of wilderness painting. Lucky in his publisher, he was allowed to bind into this book first-rate reproductions of the 152 on-the-spot scenes and portraits painted by Catlin during those gallant wanderings in the 1850s. For the first time since their broken and dying creator displayed them to his uninterested countrymen on the Smithsonian walls in 1871, these unusual pictures—thinly brushed on Bristol board—can thus be conveniently appraised.

Renewed appraisal of Catlin is in order, now that all his original admirers and haters are gone. Long hidden away, by hundreds, in museum and library storages, Catlin's pictures are being cleaned and exhibited and reproduced. As Mr. Ross notes, the early prairie paintings on canvas are perforce very unlike the later "cartoons" on Bristol board. Now meticulous and now slapdash with careless haste, Catlin's brush aimed sometimes at romantic effect, sometimes at ruthless truth, and sometimes at wry caricature. With sight quickening as hearing failed, his later coloring emphasizes the play of light and shadow and the splendor of fire.

These two fine books still leave room for another on George Catlin the showman. Versed in the gold-bearing museum methods of Daniel Bowen and Charles Willson Peale, Catlin lived and lived well for a long span on the income from his original Wild West show—combining a humanitarian mission with a profit motive, as honest and dedicated men of his generation could so deftly do.

The Anatomy of American Popular Culture, 1840–1861. By Carl Bode. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959. xxi + 292 pages, illus., note on sources, index. $6.00.)

Reviewed by Alan Burroughs, *historian of American art.*

To an elderly reviewer of an essay on our culture of two or three

generations ago, few details may seem novel or particularly important. Most of us know from our grandparents something of the charms of 1850 songs, bracket architecture, whatnot drawing rooms, pious or sentimental touches in general, and also about the practical attitudes which transcend the usual clichés. We even may sentimentalize over certain details, such as 1840-1860 book bindings, a subject not included in this ambitious analysis of pre-Civil War Popular Culture.

Yet Prof. Carl Bode has done well by showing in this 1840–1861 period a complex pattern which seems to predict the present. Under the headings of Patriotism, Aggressiveness, Religiosity, and Love ("for want of a better word") he outlines the parallel and supports it with a welter of source material on former favorites who are now, we blandly assume, justly ignored. Among these are the artists of the little known Cosmopolitan Art Association, which succeeded the American Art Union, the makers of public statues, sensational writers like George Lippard, the "Scribbling Women," the reveries of "Ike Marvel," the travel writers, including "Marquesas" Melville, who was in this period not yet the great master, the majestic historians and their counterpart, the popularizer Joel Headley.

Thus the elderly reader's familiarity with the era is stimulated by fresh evidence, about book sales, for instance, or pianos, plays and poems which in essence seem to be compatible with modern popular tastes. The thoroughness and the originality of Prof. Bode's *Anatomy of American Popular Culture*, "that interesting ambiguous thing," are nicely summarized in his unpretentious notes on the sources.

The Electoral College. By Lucius Wilmerding, Jr. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1958. xiii + 224 pages, appendix, index. $5.00.)

Reviewed by John S. Goff, *Assistant Professor of History, West Texas State College.*

The electoral college is today to the governmental body of the United States what the appendix is to the human body. There is a tendency to forget that a system of indirect election of the President and Vice President even exists until it causes national discomfort by upsetting the will of the majority. Although this has not happened since the Cleveland-Harrison contest of 1888, the electoral college is nevertheless worthy of more attention than it has received. This particular study is perhaps of greater value to the political scientist than to the student of history, for the bulk of the work is concerned with an analysis of the present operation of the system and with various proposals for reforming it. Still, there is much of interest for all readers.

Mr. Wilmerding, in that part of the work devoted to the history of the subject, pays special attention to the creation of the electoral college

and the reasons for its inclusion in the Federal Constitution. There is also a good discussion of the Twelfth Amendment and its relationship to the selection of the President and Vice President. It was, of course, this amendment which first brought about the custom of voting for the two offices separately, with each elector specifying his choice for each office. Here, the author states, ended the Founding Fathers' attempt "to produce a worthy Vice President," for under the old system it was the candidate with the second highest number of votes for President who assumed this office. Even so, the plan had already failed, for in 1800 Burr was certainly not of the same calibre as was Jefferson and the Democratic-Republican electors clearly intended Burr to take the second place. Of much interest is the fact that the Twelfth Amendment was adopted only to insure the re-election of Jefferson and not simply to clear up the confusion caused by the tie vote in 1800.

The method of selecting electors—a subject that receives close attention—is described as "multiform and unsteady" until the 1830s. For example, at one time the Tennessee legislature divided the State into districts and, within each, named certain persons who would in turn choose the electors. Thus thirty-three prominent persons, in effect, voted for all of the citizens of Tennessee. It is evident that under this and other almost equally odd systems the popular will could be thwarted, and it was. Congress, of course, could not interfere for, as the author mentions, this was a matter entirely reserved to the States.

In summary, this is a factual, informative, and readable account of the electoral college and should be welcomed as a valuable contribution to the field of United States constitutional studies. Although the author's point of the desirability of reform in the system of selecting our Chief Executive is well taken, one suspects that, as he admits, possibly "nothing can be done until misfortune strikes. . . ."

Uncle Sam: the Man and the Legend. By Alton Ketchum. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959. xiii + 143 pages, illus., biblio., index. $4.50.)

Reviewed by Frank Weitenkampf, *former Curator of Prints, The New York Public Library*.

The jacket of this book tells more than the title page: "The story of America's early symbols, the Uncle Sam image, and the cartoonists who created them through the years." Quite an undertaking, which the author manages to deal with in 143 pages, including nine pages of bibliography and index, and finding room even for digressions. He lets his fancy play neatly around the development of symbols. He also gives a long and carefully documented account of the life of Samuel Wilson, "the original of Uncle Sam." But what is of prime interest and importance in this addition to the bibliography of American comic art is the symbolical Uncle Sam of the cartoonists, and this record, in text and illustrations,

of how they used him. That leads to consideration of the corrective force exercised by political caricature, and of its documentary value to the historian. We are again shown that caricature is an essential element in the record of political history. That is so, even though it has often enough been influenced by prejudice, habit, or misplaced party loyalty.

There have been changes in our graphic humor, changes in viewpoint and expression, in technique, in conditions of publication. Today's political cartoonists, tied to the daily paper, are restricted in time and space, and crowded in competition. That is reflected in their conceptions of Uncle Sam. Our author finds that "although Uncle Sam is shown . . . with such varying degrees of emphasis, his total personality is not . . . altered." But he adds that "faults in the current crop of Uncle Sams would be found chiefly in the failure to develop all the rich potentials of his character." That's the important point. The expression of character and of varying moods in the drawings of the symbolic old gentleman was presented better in general, and more habitually, by old-time artists such as Nast and Keppler, and the later Rollin Kirby. They gave his figure a dignity which is often wanting today, and even more so in foreign cartoons.

Mr. Ketchum has obviously been so thorough in his research that one might hesitate to question any of his statements. However, DeBry's pictures of Indians may be found not altogether "authentic," and Amos Doolittle may be shorn of the credit of having drawn the four battle-pieces which he engraved. All that does not affect the principal topic of the book. Nor does it matter that a minor artist in 1869 apparently ante-dated Nast in putting chin-whiskers on our Uncle, and that the present writer does not remember an Uncle Sam wearing congress gaiters.

Should there be desire to go even beyond the rich and varied record here offered, in text and pictures, of Uncle Sam's development, there are the resources of the New York Public Library's Print Room—such as the chronologically arranged cartoons of Nast, Keppler and others—and of The New-York Historical Society, with its noteworthy large collection of the earlier separately published cartoons. In this mass of material Uncle Sam appears in a diversity of states of mind well described by Rollin Kirby as quoted by Mr. Ketchum, who in this book shows the symbol almost taking on the appearance of a real living existence.

Risk and Technological Innovation: American Manufacturing Methods during the Nineteenth Century. By W. Paul Strassman. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959. x + 249 pages, biblio., index. $4.00.)

Reviewed by Vincent P. Carosso, *Department of History, New York University.*

The importance of the technological innovations which occurred in

American manufacturing during the 19th century has been emphasized often and their consequences upon the structure and performance of American industry stressed frequently. Indeed, it would be difficult today to find a reputable work which did not make some form of obeisance to the role of the new technology in the making of the American industrial complex. And yet, how much do we really know about the motives behind the entrepreneurial decisions which brought about many of these changes, or the ways in which the scientific and technological developments of the past century affected the organization and operation of the business system, or the extent to which businessmen accepted or rejected many of the new advances? What was the nature of, and how close were the ties between, scientists, technicians, and businessmen? If, for example, an entrepreneur accepted a novel method of production, how aware was he of the risks involved in the change? These, among others, are a few of the many important questions raised and discussed in this careful and well-written monograph.

This work is not intended as a study of risk in the history of American business, even though one is badly needed, as Henrietta M. Larson pointed out nearly a decade ago and as Mr. Strassman indicated last year in his brief article, "Risk, Entrepreneurial Caution, and Business History," *The Business History Review*, XXXII (Winter 1958), 455–59. His primary concern here is to appraise the nature of "the risks assumed by the entrepreneurs who introduced new methods of production in nineteenth-century America" and "to demonstrate when and for what reasons the introduction of new manufacturing methods led to business losses and risks." He accomplishes this task by analyzing the nature and extent of entrepreneurial daring, caution, and risk-bearing in four 19th-century industries (iron and steel, textiles, machine tools, and electric power). Technical terms are defined clearly and precisely. Technological innovation is employed to mean "all the actions taken as a consequence of a decision . . . to bring a device or process into commercial use," while risk is defined as "a significant but to some extent unpredictable chance of loss." Mr. Strassman is equally careful in pointing out that he is concerned only with technological change from "the time when a first decision was made to alter the routine of production, when funds were staked on an untried novelty, when new technical knowledge was first applied on a commercial basis." These are some of the concepts employed to analyze the risks involved in the technological changes which occurred in the industries studied. Brief summaries at the end of each chapter underscore pointedly the basic problems and the risks which businessmen assumed when they accepted a new advance in science or technology.

By and large, and with a few exceptions, the businessmen in the four industries investigated in this study did not lose much money from adopting the new advances, because "technological innovation in manu-

facturing methods had been reduced to a fairly predictable and safe routine" and because "change . . . was brought about, not by heroic gambling, but by the cautious exploitation of vast and multiplying opportunities." A few specialists may question some of Mr. Strassman's definitions or may disagree with certain of his details or interpretations. Most readers, however, will profit from the wealth of information and the new insights which this study provides, not to mention the many long-held misconceptions which it demolishes.

Third Parties in American Politics. By Howard P. Nash, Jr. With illustrations compiled by M. B. Schnapper and an introduction by William B. Hesseltine. (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, [1959]. ix + 326 pages, illus., biblio., index. $6.00.)

Reviewed by Helene Maxwell Hooker, *Queens College, editor of Pinchot's* History of the Progressive Party 1912–16.

This book is at best an introduction to the subject, yet it is not even that. Professor Hesseltine describes *Third Parties in American Politics* as "by no means definitive," and he is correct. One glaring trouble is one-sidedness. Out of eleven chapters, six deal with the Republican Party and the dissident movements connected with it—for example, the Liberal Republicans, the Mugwumps, the progressive movement, and the Bull Moose Party. Consequently, one carries with him the astonishing impression that the strongest third-party movements in American political history stem from the G.O.P. The Socialist Party is given inadequate shrift, and the interesting question of what happened to the progressive movement in the 1920s is ignored. Chapter 11, "Parties of the Left," moves from the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of 1874 through the Dixiecrats of 1956, all in 43 pages, many of which are full-page illustrations. It is difficult to understand why the reactionary Dixiecrats are included with the leftwingers, particularly since Mr. Nash recognizes their exceedingly conservative nature.

The bibliography is seriously inadequate, lacking inclusion of standard works. M. B. Schnapper's compilation of illustrations, which are numerous, is the best feature of the book. They convey a sense of history that is lacking in the text.

The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900–1912. By George E. Mowry. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958. xvi + 330 pages, illus., biblio., index. $5.00.)

Reviewed by Helene Maxwell Hooker, *Queens College, editor of Pinchot's* History of the Progressive Party 1912–16.

Professor Mowry, who has already given us *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* and *The California Progressives*, here charts the growth and development of the progressive movement from 1900 to

1912. Some readers will probably contend that the entire twelve years is more than "the era of Theodore Roosevelt," but Professor Mowry can argue that he has chosen the name of the dominant political personality of the period.

The book, one of the New American Nation Series, involves a tremendous task: to dramatize the high points, to describe the complicated political developments and maneuverings of those important years, and at the same time to provide the student with an introduction to the period. All this is what Professor Mowry has undertaken. As he says, "Ideology . . . is only one of the many elements that decide national political contests. Personality, organization, money, myth, and chance are all weighty counters in the final result." He has considered these elements; he has had to define them, develop them, and synthesize them.

To this reviewer, the account is least successful in the first five chapters, where he sets the scene and describes a formidable and complicated variety of trends: "Material America," "Intellectual Tides," "Political America," "The Cities and the States," and "The Progressive Profile." Here the pace sometimes drags and one feels the effects of over-simplification. But the story picks up in chapter six, when Theodore Roosevelt enters the scene. Indeed, the account of Roosevelt's presidential years; the argument for his earlier-than-generally-accepted interest in progressive ideas, an interest that is placed back in 1907–8; the analysis of Roosevelt as a political strategist; the discussion of the political repercussions of the Ballinger-Pinchot Controversy—all these deserve special mention. In addition, the presentation of the sluggishness, the obstinacy, and the unoriginality of William Howard Taft come through well. Professor Mowry is an honest man who does not attempt to gild his prejudices.

Because so much material has necessarily had to be crammed into so little space, one wonders if in places the presentation is not more full of meaning to experts who can read between the lines than to beginning students who can read only the lines themselves. One is grateful for the honesty of the writing; yet sometimes the narrative conveys a flatness that a knowledge of the original sources belies. There are, also, several slight errors of fact that a reader with any background can detect and several points of interpretation are open to question.

But such enumerations are niggling. What is important is that Professor Mowry has written a solid, thorough, and informative book. It is undoubtedly the standard text; there is no comparable introduction to the period. One last point deserves emphatic and grateful mention. The bibliographies are excellent. They are models of their kind.

Essays in American Jewish History to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Jewish Archives. Under the direction of Jacob Rader Marcus. (Cincinnati: Published for The

American Jewish Archives by The Hebrew Union College Press, 1958. xvii + 534 pages, index. $7.50.)

American Jewry: Documents—Eighteenth Century. Edited by Jacob Rader Marcus. (Cincinnati: The Hebrew Union College Press, 1959. xix + 492 pages, index. $8.50.)

Reviewed by Edgar F. Romig, D.D., *Senior Minister, Collegiate Church of New York.*

Of the two volumes relating to Judaism in America which have recently come to our attention, the first is an appropriate *Festschrift* in tribute to two lustrums of scholarly research in building up the American Jewish archives. Its essays, by many writers, will perhaps not be of interest to the non-Jewish reader—with one or two exceptions. One, on the "motivation of the German-Jewish emigration to America in the Post-Mendelssohnian era," throws light on the various reasons for which the emigration took place.

The volume presenting documents on 18th-century American Jewry is rich in its presentations. It covers four fields: (1) the personal life, (2) the religious life, (3) the general community, and (4) commerce and trade. Here the reviewer has indeed an embarrassment of riches, and all that he can do is to select a few of the multifarious chapters for comment. Number 17 is distinctly valuable in the annals of our city. Entitled "Town life in occupied New York—1781," it gives quotations from letters. From them we learn that food and messages were regularly being shuttled between the American and British lines. The spirit of these breezy communications, with their chit-chat and their anecdotes, reflects that lighter tone which, as in Brussels on the eve of Waterloo, was in ironic contrast to the harsh realities of a conflict bringing tragic loss to the American people generally. Other intriguing essays in the diversified list are: (No. 3) "Aaron Lopez buys three lottery tickets—1753"; (No. 5) "The libraries of Nathan Levy and Samuel Judah—1754–1773"; (No. 38) "The beginnings of the Newport Synagogue—1754–1764"; (No. 59) "American Jewry prepares to write to President Washington—1790"; and (No. 185) "Jacob Rodriguez Rivera writes to the captain of one of his slave ships—1785."

We turn back for brief comment on No. 32, "Dr. Moses Sheftall discusses a medical problem with Benjamin Rush—1795." Sheftall was a great admirer of Rush, under whose tutelage he had studied in 1790–92. In the letter Sheftall sought Rush's advice on how to fight yellow fever, offered his condolences on the death of his friend's sister, and aligned himself with Rush in his medical battles with Dr. Adam Kuhn and others. It must be added that Sheftall was not a mere imitator, and his epistle contains comment on the diagnosis and treatment of the dread disease which show him as in advance of his day, scientifically, in the treatment

of illness. We pause in tribute to a noble spirit as we read his concluding paragraph: "With my best wishes for your future health, and may the Great Author of all beings long preserve and protect you, and increase the number of your years, that you may long be a lasting evidence and scourge to pestilential fever should your city be ever again visited, which Heaven forbid. . . ."

This writer is under temptation to quote copiously on references in the volume to Congregation Shearith Israel in New York, that noble center of Judaism of Spanish-Portuguese background and of Sephardic tradition whose place in the community today is a distinguished one. But he must subscribe to the limits of space required of a reviewer. He lays aside this essay with the reflection that Jacob Rader Marcus, with his profound knowledge of Judaism, and his sparkling versatility, would be a valued participant in a round-table on the theme treated in these volumes.

Things That Go Bump in the Night. By Louis C. Jones. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959. xii + 208 pages, notes and sources, index. $3.75.)

Reviewed by Moritz Jagendorf, *Contributing Editor,* New York Folklore Quarterly.

One of the most enjoyable folklore books written is W. H. Thompson's *Body, Boots, and Britches.* It was the result of classroom work by students who were asked to gather folk tales, mores, riddles, etc., from their parents, friends and relatives. What makes it most pleasant and instructive reading is the lively and delightful style in which the material is presented.

Now Dr. Louis C. Jones has written a book of ghost lore also based on information collected by students from the same kind of informants. And it is equally successful—if for no other reason, by the sheer charm of its style.

This scholarly work is set down in so engaging a manner that it banishes all one's inborn fears and prejudices and makes of ghosts pleasant and amusing companions. Here the "enchantment of death" becomes a "warm and friendly quality" and the whole realm of the "restless dead" loses its popular stigma of the gruesome and the macabre. It is actually a pleasure to know these spooks and ghosts.

The book begins by "Introducing the Dead"—a recounting of the author's personal knowledge of and experiences with ghosts, and then proceeds through five categories of stories running the gamut of every phase and type of ghost and spook encountered not only in New York State but in other places as well. Notes and sources for every tale are given at the end of the book.

Such is the arrangement of the volume. What makes it a folklore-gourmet's creation is the way it is written. Throughout there is a feeling

of pleasant reality spiced with the whimsey and humor of the ghost world. The fearsome incidents are not frightful at all but full of interest and engagingly amusing. Here and there appears a magnificent tale that contains the making of a fine ballad or a colorful novel, as does the story of "The Albany Irish Bride and Groom, the Golden Comb and the White Horse."

It is no simple task to write a scholarly book in a winsome style, but this was accomplished in *Things That Go Bump in the Night*. Folks will enjoy it and chuckle over it and I hope scholars will too.

Old Houses on Nantucket. By KENNETH DUPREY. (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc., 1959. xii + 242 pages, appendix, glossary, illus., biblio., index. $12.50.)

Reviewed by CAROLYN SCOON, *Assistant Curator of the Museum, NYHS.*

This volume is a photographic tour of the old houses of Nantucket arranged chronologically from the primitive houses of 1659–1750 through the handsome mansions of the Greek Revival period. The author himself owns an old house in Nantucket Town and this book grew out of his need to study other old houses in order to restore his own accurately.

Nantucket is unusual in that it is not a reconstruction. Many of the old homes are still owned and lived in by descendants of the original owners and all have been restored and furnished with regard to their period. Several are open to the public but most are privately owned and this book is the only way they can be enjoyed by most of us. Luckily for these houses, the decline of the whaling industry meant a sharp curtailment of the income of the Islanders and in consequence the houses escaped many of the "improvements" of the Victorian era. Thus, they represent a purity of style hard to find in other localities.

Architectural styles on Nantucket followed quite closely those on the mainland, but differences did develop and these are fully described in a chapter on "The Typical Nantucket House." Measured drawings for this type are given in the appendix. This style has never been adequately treated, so this discussion represents a distinct contribution to architectural history.

Each of the five chapters dealing with a particular period is prefaced by a short introduction to the period but the photographs of actual houses with their concise captions really tell the story. There are 352 photographs of exteriors and interiors, taken by the author, which are of uniformly high quality. The interior views, showing details of construction, will be of interest to all owners of old houses. For instance, a photograph on page 22, of the fireplace wall of the Tobey house, showing doors leading to the cellar stair and to the upstairs is of special interest to

this reviewer. This arrangement—including the narrow winding stairs shown in another view—is typical of many houses in northeastern Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It was surprising to find that it was also used in Nantucket. The interior views will be valuable as examples of period decoration and as suggestions for "living with antiques," to borrow a phrase known to the readers of *Antiques* Magazine.

Guide to the Manuscript Maps in the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. Compiled by CHRISTIAN BRUN, Map and Print Librarian. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1959. xiii + 209 pages, illus., index. $4.00.)

Reviewed by ARTHUR B. CARLSON, *Curator of Maps and Prints, NYHS.*

This guide lists in detail 806 items, including maps and surveys from the papers of Lieut. Gen. Thomas Gage, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America from 1763 to 1775; of Sir Henry Clinton, in command of the British forces during the American Revolution from 1778 to 1782; of Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for America, 1775–1782; and of Lord Shelburne, British Prime Minister, 1782–1783. Of American origin are maps from the letters of General Josiah Harmar, first Commander-in-Chief of the American Army after the American Revolution, and listings of surveys by Loammi Baldwin and Son, and of surveys in New York State by William Wilson.

A Guide to the Manuscripts Collection of the New Jersey Historical Society. By FRED SHELLEY, Librarian. (Newark: The Society, 1957. [81] pages, index. $2.50.)

This is the first comprehensive guide to the 75,000 or so manuscripts in the New Jersey Historical Society's growing collection. These are described in 337 group-entries, each entry indicating the inclusive dates and number of items in the group, their general subject matter, any further keys to contents available at the Society, publication data if any, and often a selected list of correspondents. Some 1,700 persons, places, and subjects are specified in the entries as among the myriads represented in the collection. These are alphabetically listed, many with several entry-number citations, in the 15-page index to the *Guide*. The letters, diaries, account books, church records, orderly books, court dockets, surveyor's journals, and many other types of manuscripts in the collection constitute a mine of source materials essential to any serious study of New Jersey history. And they are often of tangential and sometimes of prime interest to New York historians as well. This *Guide* provides a first-rate initial key to them.

C.E.B.

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Rita Susswein Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York 1726–1776* (1938). xviii+450 pp., index, $3.00.

Same, *1777–1799* (1954). xix+484 pp., illus., index, $4.00.

R.W.G. Vail, *Knickerbocker Birthday: A Sesqui-Centennial History of The New-York Historical Society 1804–1954* (1954). xix+547 pp., 180 illus., index, $6.00.

Theodore Bolton and Irwin F. Cortelyou, *Ezra Ames of Albany: Portrait Painter, Craftsman, Royal Arch Mason, Banker, 1768–1836; And a Catalogue of His Works* (1955). xx+398 pp., 120 illus., index, $4.95.

Philip L. White, *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce 1647–1877* with an Introduction by Dr. Fenwick Beekman (1956). xxxi+705 pp., 57 illus., index, $10.00.

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Ruel P. Tolman, *The Life and Works of Edward Greene Malbone 1777–1807* (1958). xxiii+322 pp., 226 illus. (2 in color), biblio., index, $12.50.